

**Funerary
Epigrams of
Ancient Greece**

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Marta;**

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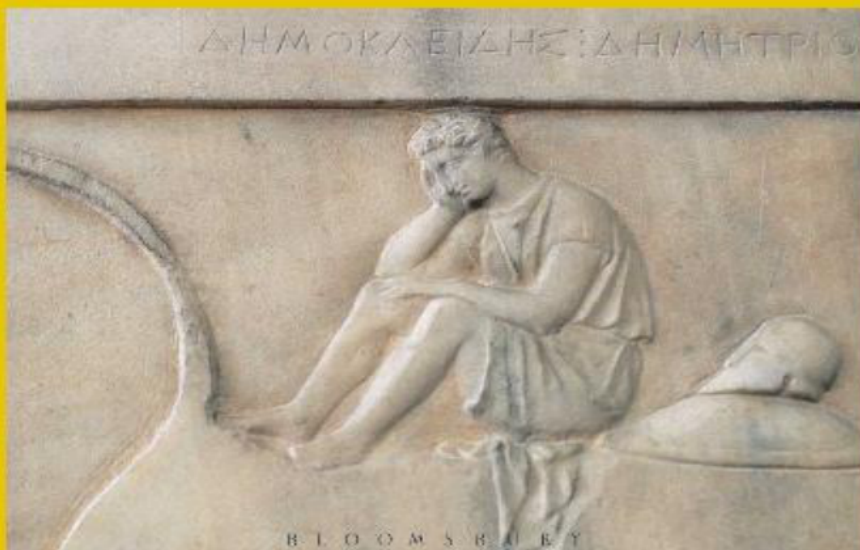
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Marta González González

FUNERARY EPIGRAMS
OF ANCIENT GREECE

REFLECTIONS ON LITERATURE,
SOCIETY AND RELIGION

BLOOMSBURY CLASSICAL STUDIES MONOGRAPHS



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Funerary Epigrams of
Ancient Greece

*Reflections on Literature, Society
and Religion*

Marta González González

BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
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*To my father,
Fausto González Velasco (1927–2014),
who taught all three of us not to use words to hurt*

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Acknowledgements

I would like to begin this volume by expressing my gratitude to some scholars who have generously devoted their time to reading some or all of these pages, have made suggestions and comments that have improved this book immensely, and most particularly, have thus demonstrated their interest in my work and allowed me to participate in an academic dialogue in which, for obvious reasons, I have always been one who has learnt and benefitted. I am first and most especially grateful for the help of Fritz Graf, Jan Bremmer and David Konstan. Other colleagues have allowed me to present some of the arguments that appear in this book at their universities, including Maria Cannata (University of Messina), Lucio Ceccarelli (University of L'Aquila), Luisa de Nazaré Ferreira (University of Coimbra), and Nuno Simões (University of Lisbon). Anonymous reviewers for Bloomsbury Publishing were very helpful, and I appreciate their valuable advice.

I also thank Alice Wright and Emma Payne at Bloomsbury Academic for the enthusiasm and enormous kindness with which they welcomed this book proposal.

Lastly, I am grateful to Nancy Clarneau for the patience she has shown when translating these pages.

Marta González González
May 2018

Introduction

Greek funerary art seeks beauty and exalts excellence, *arete*. Stelai and statues stand *along the road* with the intent that the passer-by would pause, contemplate, remember and mourn. These are retrospective monuments in the sense that they represent those no longer present, using the best image of what they were in life: splendid athletes, valiant warriors, maidens of promise, loving mothers. These idealized images, not at all realistic, serve not so much to reflect a determined social organization as to actually construct it. To the extent that they look towards the future, they do not speak of punishment or reward, and certainly do not denigrate this life in favour of a better one: if any immortality is imagined, it is the immortality of renown (*kleos*) attained from the particular virtue commemorated in the epigram, and, in no small measure, from the skill of the artist commissioned for the monument.

In the pages that follow, I will take time to pause at some of these Greek memorials of the Archaic and Classical periods. Although my interest is primarily a literary one, the epitaphs are much better understood in the few cases where their corresponding image, statue or stele is preserved. Naturally, I have taken a selection of epigrams from the extensive corpus, a sample significant in size, not overlooking any of the fundamental examples, and giving priority to those cases where the whole monument ensemble is preserved, both text and image. From this evidence I hope to draw out information about the society that created it, giving attention to the parameters of age, gender and social status. This study is structured around the presentation of such information, ordered within its historical and chronological context.

Chapters 1 (The funerary landscape: a reflection of the world of the living), and 2 (The literary form: tears of Simonides ... and of Pindar) present the texts and their context, the type of literature that these funerary epigrams represent, and the archaeological landscape in which they are embedded. To expand our field of view, in both time and space, I begin with the archaeological landscape, outlining briefly the evolution of Greek funerary customs and the general traits of the art that emerges from them.

Monuments from the Archaic age are the focus of the next chapter (Chapter 3: Phrasikleia, *forever a maiden*. Kroisos, *whom raging Ares destroyed*), focusing especially on the funerary statues that nobles dedicated to their deceased youths. Special attention is given to two exceptional monuments, those of the maiden Phrasikleia and of Kroisos the young warrior, their funerary statues surviving together with the brief elegiac distich of the epitaph.

The Classical age is marked by the appearance of the splendid Attic stelai, attributed by most scholars to the same artists who worked on the reconstruction of the Athenian acropolis after the destruction of the Persian Wars. At this time, the epigrams are somewhat longer than in Archaic times. These funerary monuments target a more diverse social group than those of the Archaic age. The present study focuses on the epitaphs of individuals in the more significant stages of life, where gender differences are most marked. Thus, setting aside childhood and old age, I consider youths who died before their time (Chapter 4: How to deprive the year of its spring). I also study epitaphs that are more unusual in that it is not a family member who makes the dedication but where intimate friendship has prompted commemoration (Chapter 5: Immortal remembrance of friends). The next chapter focuses on the epitaphs of husbands and wives (Chapter 6: Wives and their masters). I devote some space to two types of funerary epigrams that share the unusual element of explicitly mentioning the cause of death: death in childbirth and death at sea. While the first case is linked naturally to the female gender, the second predominantly (though not exclusively) belongs to men (Chapter 7: Powerful enemies: childbirth, the sea).

Finally, the last chapter (Chapter 8: Rewards for piety ... next to Persephone) focuses on eschatological allusions in funerary epigraphy. In the fourth century especially, we begin to find references to rewards in the hereafter for having attained piety, *eusebeia*. Interestingly, certain expressions that now appear for the first time in inscriptions bear some resemblance to expressions used in the famous *lamellae aureae*, focusing on Persephone, Queen of the Underworld.

Most of the evidence in this book comes from Attica, and the Kerameikos remains a fascinating area. However, excavations continue in different parts of Greece, bringing to light works of great interest. I often include this information in a peripheral way to round out the chapters presented here and to put into perspective the tentative nature of the conclusions offered here. If the archaeological funerary landscape reflects the world of the living, then social and historical differences between one region and another are logically manifest in their necropoleis.

It seems justifiable to consider only the metrical epitaphs: they constitute a very extensive but manageable corpus (not the case if we were to consider *all* epitaphs) and have considerable documentary value. The non-metrical epitaphs convey very little information: the name of the deceased, sometimes his or her place of birth or affiliation, and little more.

Only a small selection of the preserved epigrams will be analysed here, but I have tried to ensure that the sample is relevant. In both the selection and the commentary, I have turned my attention to the aspects that in my opinion have been the most neglected, and to details that enable general claims to be tested, for example that death before marriage was a theme exclusive to the tombs of young women, that the people who dedicated

epitaphs always had family ties to the deceased, or that funerary epigraphy abounds in references to the separation of soul and body after death. A chronological perspective is useful to review and clarify these claims. The fact that I examine private rather than public epigrams is reflected in the structure of this volume: after the first and second introductory chapters, the third focuses on Archaic epitaphs, basically from the sixth century BC, while the vast majority of the epigrams studied in subsequent chapters are from the fourth century BC, with a few exceptions from the late fifth century BC. This leap forward in time, and the fact that most of the epigrams selected are from Attica, necessarily leaves out epitaphs from much of the fifth century BC, a period in which the victorious atmosphere that followed the Greco-Persian Wars prompted the most important cities, especially Athens, to commission epigrams for the war dead,¹ and the importance of private memorials waned. Public memorials for the war dead, for which there is an abundant and recent bibliography, are not analysed here.²

The epigraphic and iconographic sources used here are listed along with the rest of the bibliography at the end of this study; however, I wish to briefly mention the primary works that are constantly cited throughout these pages.

Epigraphic sources

Peter Allan Hansen's publications, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca saeculorum VIII-V a. Chr. n.* and *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca saeculi IV a. Chr. n.*, are taken as the documentary basis for this study. The author collects metrical epigrams, whether funerary or not, from the eighth to the fourth centuries BC. This work is cited as *CEG* in the present study, as is customary in all studies that draw from it.

One wide-ranging publication of Greek metrical epigrams from all eras and geographic locations is *Greek Verse Inscriptions. Epigrams on Funerary Stelae and Monuments*, by Werner Peek. This was the standard reference work before Hansen's publication, and is still used widely today, although many of its reconstructions have been criticized. The epitaphs cited throughout these pages also include their equivalent as shown in this publication, indicated with *GVI*.

Only rarely will I refer to epitaphs from the third century BC. In this case, Peek's publication mentioned above has been used, complemented by the more recent publication by Élodie Cairon, *Les épitaphes métriques hellénistiques du Péloponnèse à la Thessalie*, who compiles metrical funerary epigrams from peninsular Greece (Attica and Thessaly represent two thirds of the whole), from the death of Alexander the Great until the publication of the *Garland of Philippus*, c. 40 AD.

A consideration of Anne-Marie Vérilhac's work, ΠΑΙΔΕΣ ΑΩΡΟΙ, *Poésie Funéraire*, is also a requirement for our topic of study. Her book covers

funerary epigrams from all eras and locations that commemorate boys and girls who suffered an untimely death. Her focus is on children rather than youths, and the timeframe is excessively wide; nonetheless, I have taken this work into account for my study.

Finally, I have reviewed the corresponding volumes of the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (SEG) for the more important epigraphic discoveries that have appeared since the Hansen publication. These advances considerably enrich the known data and can force us to reconsider instances that might otherwise be thought of as 'exceptional'. In short, they remind us that, of all categories, the *unicum*, the *hapax*, is most unstable.

Iconographic sources

One of the first historical studies on the origin and interpretation of Attic funerary stelai is K. Friis Johansen's work, *The Attic Grave-Reliefs of the Classical Period. An Essay in Interpretation*, still a fundamental resource. Its author poses many of the open questions regarding the funerary stelai, seemingly simple and classifiable works of art. Johansen wonders, for example, who the deceased person is in grave-reliefs of couples or family groups, where we have no epigram that clarifies the situation. From Johansen's historical perspective he establishes that the seated posture of the deceased person, a norm in the Archaic period, is not applicable in the Classical period. Also significant to this study is the still unresolved debate as to the meaning of *dexiosis*: a gesture of farewell, a gesture of encounter (depending on whether we consider the encounter to take place in *this* world, with the graveside visit, or in the *other* world). Johansen interprets it as a gesture occurring within the close family relationship of the characters in the scene.

Another reference volume is Gisela M.A. Richter's *The Archaic Gravestones of Attica*, which reproduces and discusses the corpus of Attic stelai from the seventh and sixth centuries BC. When the stele is accompanied by an inscription, the study is supplemented with an epigraphic commentary by Margherita Guarducci. Richter also wrote two fundamental works on *korai* and *kouroi*: *Korai. Archaic Greek Maidens. A Study of the Development of the Kore Type in Greek Sculpture*, and *Kouroi. Archaic Greek Youths. A Study of the Development of the Kouros Type in Greek Sculpture*.

In addition to these pioneering works, one of the key names associated with the study of funerary monuments as a whole (image and inscription) is that of Christoph W. Clairmont, *Gravestone and Epigram: Greek Memorials from the Archaic and Classical Period*. Here Clairmont presents a corpus of the Archaic funerary monuments, whether decorated with reliefs or paintings, where both image and epigram are preserved. Although he presents ninety-two pieces in total, a quarter of these are too fragmented and of little use. Attica, as always, is the source of more and better examples. More recently, Clairmont published *Classical Attic Tombstones*, a nine-volume reference work

that reproduces and discusses Attic stelai from the Classical Age. In this monumental publication, the author inevitably refers to the devastating article by Georges Daux³ that critiqued Clairmont's initial study from years before. While accepting some criticisms, Clairmont defends himself, not without reason, by pointing out the fruitfulness of his pioneering work. In this line, Clairmont mentions some of the titles that had appeared since his 1970 work, which demonstrate the viability and interest of the joint study of stelai and epigrams. In fact, in his new work, he clarified some observations made in his first work, where he often showed scepticism in regard to the relationship between text and image. An evaluation of Clairmont's contribution to the study of Greek funerary art was the object of an interesting colloquium published by Geneviève Hoffmann, *Les pierres de l'offrande. Autour de l'œuvre de Christoph W. Clairmont*. Both of Clairmont's studies are cited throughout the following pages, indicated by 'Clairmont', when referring to his first work, or CAT, when referring to the second.

A note regarding the translations

The texts that I am going to analyse are first presented in the original Greek, followed by an English translation to make them accessible to the reader. I understand translation to have a merely instrumental value: it is neither the purpose nor the result of a study such as this. When offering translations of highly complex texts, as in our case where the texts are cultural artefacts, the result usually involves the translator's own interpretation. In my case, I have tried to leave interpretation to the commentary, and maintain a certain neutrality in the translation, as far as possible. Thus, for each of the terms that belong to the usual lexicon of epitaphs (and therefore, to the cultural context that concerns us), I have opted for a single translation that I maintain throughout.

Let us consider this more closely. A large proportion of the terms used in the epitaphs refer to a cultural world and system of values that only correspond to our own in part, perhaps very little at all. At times I have tried to close the gap between the original and the translated text by including notes and explanations, sometimes historical, sometimes etymological. To illustrate this, let us consider two terms, *arete* (ἀρετή) and *sophrosyne* (σωφροσύνη), whose frequent appearance in funerary poetry warrants some mention in this preamble. I have chosen to translate *arete* as 'excellence'. No matter how great the difference between the Homeric hero and the noble whose funerary stele stands along the road, excellence in one and the other is sung alike. *Arete* is the skill to stand out in something, it is the set of attributes and abilities that confer preeminence upon the one who possesses them; their owner becomes *aristos*. Again, whether we refer to the warriors of the *Iliad* or aristocrats of the Archaic age, to be *aristos* is to 'be spoken of' as *aristos*, bringing us to another crucial concept, that of *kleos*, or renown, the

driving force behind the epic, and the ultimate motivation of funerary art.⁴ As for *sophrosyne*, its translation presents a different type of problem. The term refers to ‘good sense’, ‘good judgement’ or ‘prudence’. I translate this systematically as ‘good judgement’, and thereby make no artificial distinction between male and female *sophrosyne*. Certainly, the Greeks – and yes, we ourselves – have different ideas about what it means for a woman to have good judgement and what it means for a man. We often find translations that overrun any nuances, and superimpose our own prejudices, ascribing them to the Ancient Greeks; *sophrosyne* in the epitaphs of men is translated as ‘intelligence’ or ‘good judgement’, and in the epitaphs of women, as ‘prudence’ or ‘modesty’, doing an injustice to these texts where men and women were praised in the same terms. The undeniable differences between what would be considered – then and now – a judicious man or a judicious woman, do not take the shape of two virtues with different names. In any case, translating always means making a choice; by attempting to avoid what I consider common translation errors, it is likely that I fall into others. It is up to the reader to point these out, but the reader can be assured that the English term ‘excellence’ always corresponds to the Greek ἀρετή, and ‘good judgement’ to σωφροσύνη. In short, the intent is to offer a more accessible version of the Greek text.

There is another term that causes even greater problems: *psyche* (ψυχή). The English word *soul*, with its long Platonic, Neo-Platonic and Christian tradition, is inseparable from the condition of immortality. To believe in the existence of the soul is practically the same as believing that there is something eternal that remains after physical death. But this is not true of the Greek term ψυχή, that last breath that escaped from the mouth or the wounds of Homeric heroes in their dying moment. Separation from the body did not imply that the soul continued to exist, or more precisely, did not imply immortality; it might live on, we do not know for how long, as a ghost in Hades that attains neither reward nor punishment for its life on Earth. Immortality of the soul was not preached until the arrival of the Orphic, Eleusinian and Dionysian cults, and more extensively, from Plato onward. In fact, as Burkert indicates, it was no less than a revolution that the epithet used by Homer to characterize the gods (the *Immortals*) would become essential in the human being.⁵ The epitaphs we examine in this study occasionally speak of the separation of *soma* and *psyche*, body and soul, after death, but not of the immortality of the soul; only once is this explicitly affirmed, in an epitaph from the mid-fourth century BC, which we consider later.⁶ Despite all these considerations, I have preferred to maintain the convention of translating ψυχή as *soul*, but with the precautions expressed here, and occasional reminders later.

Note on the Greek text

The epigraphic texts are reproduced in accordance with Peter Allan Hansen's publication cited above, except when noted. For the interested reader, I include here a list of diacritics and their meanings, in common use by publishers of these types of texts:

[αβ]	letters lost
<αβ>	emendation by the editor
{αβ}	superfluous letters deleted by the editor
[αβ]	letters erased or overwritten
†αβ†	<i>locus desperatus</i>
αβ	letters damaged, but almost certain
[...]	lacuna of a determined number of letters
[---]	lacuna of an undetermined number of letters
(i), (ii), (iii)	inscriptions engraved in the same stone, but separated

The Funerary Landscape: A Reflection of the World of the Living

The topic of the first chapter is the evolution of the funerary monument that bears the epitaphs. The funerary epigram was inscribed on the base of statues; in the case of the stelai, whether decorated or not, the epigram could be on the base or the body of the stele. This monument was in turn placed within a very specific setting, the necropolis, although funerary monuments have also been found in private settings, for example when families opted to bury their dead on their country estates.¹ I will briefly review the characteristics of these memorials, to help us better understand when and why the funerary monument evolved from a simple stone that marked the place of burial, to an iconic element with statues and reliefs that evoke the deceased. The final part of this chapter will refer also to funerary legislation, particularly the laws attributed to Solon; although they are not sumptuary laws in the strict sense, they do make a mark on the archaeological funerary landscape.

Funerary practices of the Ancient Greeks

The necropolis is a world of the dead that also reflects the world of the living. The study of the necropolis can help us to understand how a society is organized according to different classes of age, gender and wealth or social status. Our investigation begins with the funerary monuments of the sixth century BC and extends through the end of the fourth century BC, but it is advisable to review briefly the customs prior to this time, taking note of any indications of age, gender and status.²

Funerary customs were not exactly alike in all regions of Greece. Our study is based especially on material from Attica. In the Geometric age (c. 900–700 BC), as in the Archaic and Classical periods, both cremation and burial were customary. However, changes in preferences and customs can be detected from one period to another. Throughout the ninth century BC we find secondary cremation, in other words, a custom whereby the ashes remaining from cremation are collected from the pyre and placed in an amphora that afterwards is deposited in the pit with grave-goods; this in turn is covered with a small tumulus. Already around this time there is a verifiable difference between the graves of adults and of children,³ adopted apparently in all regions of Hellas: children were buried, not incinerated, and in Athens they were usually buried in the area of the future Agora and

not in the Kerameikos.⁴ A symbolic code is also followed in order to distinguish male tombs (funerary neck-handled amphora and war-related grave-goods: spearheads, swords) from female tombs (funerary belly-handled amphora and grave-goods related to feminine adornment: spindles, gold jewellery). The fact that, in Attica, women's graves display no less wealth than men's, is a unique case in the Greek Iron Age. In the same period, male graves begin to predominate in the Kerameikos, and in the opinion of François de Polignac, this necropolis became a place for commemorating the public status of certain men. In other words, a selective access to funerary rites is already perceptible within the elite group.

As we enter the eighth century BC, we observe a trend toward burial, although cremation continues as an aristocratic custom, following the well-known hero ritual – Patroclus, Hector – which will be recovered in the following century. The vessels that mark tombs become increasingly monumental in form, an innovation possibly due to aristocratic insistence on public commemoration for all their members, women included, whereas this privilege was previously reserved for a group of deceased males of the Kerameikos. The richest tombs are most prevalent in the rural demes.

With the beginning of the Archaic period, through the seventh century BC, we observe a number of important changes in funerary customs.⁵ Again we find cremation as the dominant practice, and we observe, especially in the Kerameikos necropolis, a restriction that excludes children and women from the practice of formal burial – an expression used to indicate the type of burial that can be analysed archaeologically.⁶ In this century, of the two types of Attic grave, those of adults and those of children, differences are seen in the method of burial (inhumation in the case of children, cremation for adults) and in the type of pottery found in the graves, when there are grave goods (Subgeometric pottery for children, Orientalizing pottery for adults). The archaeologist James Whitley, who has studied this matter in detail, suggests that formal burial of adults was in fact for men, evoking heroic funerary practices; if this is so, there would no longer be any place for female symbolism, and Attica would lose its uniqueness, rejoining the rest of Iron Age and early Archaic Greece, with customs that distinguish only between the graves of male adults and the graves of children. In this century, the grave-goods to which I have alluded are quite scarce; however, in connection with male graves we almost always find the placement of external offerings (the German term *Opferrinnen* has been adopted). These are not grave-goods strictly speaking, but rather cult offerings.⁷ Within these constructions we find evidence of the celebration of funerary banquets, including large quantities of pottery; these were most likely deposited and covered after being used in the cult celebration. Over the course of the seventh century BC, this became the usual practice in the Kerameikos; by the end of the century it had extended to other parts of Attica, and this custom makes it reasonable to interpret such remains as

indication of some kind of tomb cult, according to Whitley. All the data point unmistakably to clearly political and elite connotations of the funerary space, monopoly of the *agathoi*, throughout the seventh century BC.⁸

As we pass to the sixth century BC, there are a few changes, but less abrupt than in the previous century. Cremation is no longer the norm in adult burials, and graves once again become the place where the deceased is left with his grave-goods. By contrast, *Opferrinnen* are much less frequent: the custom of constructing such repositories was already unusual around 600 BC, and became very rare by the middle of the sixth century BC. The vessels that marked tombs disappear for the most part; in contrast, we find stone stelai and statues of youths, *kouroi* and *korai*.⁹ With the appearance of the *kore*, linked to the clan-based aristocracy, the tombs of women recover their individuality, although only unmarried young women receive this recognition. Also worth mentioning is that the funerary monuments and inscriptions of this period are usually found associated with groups of tumuli throughout Attica, in areas such as Vourva, Velanideza (the Aristion stele), Anavyssos (the Kroisos *kouros*). While it is possible to speak of aristocratic family tombs in relatively small complexes such as Vourva, studies emphasize that Archaic and Classical burials in the Athenian necropolis of the Kerameikos did not follow any family-related pattern, but rather that of age or status. The enormous tumuli that were raised in the Kerameikos between 560 and 540 BC do not represent any blood relations, but instead are groupings according to status, groups with some shared identity – men who had drunk and fought together and were buried together – and so confirm the particular role of this necropolis as manifesting public funerary ideologies, distinct from family customs.¹⁰ Women would have no representation here.

The archaeological evidence of sixth-century BC Athens reveals a city where ostentation prevails in certain funeral ceremonies. In the Kerameikos, about 580 BC, a new mound was built over the seventh-century mounds, inaugurating a new series of burials, which culminated in the gigantic Mound G (c. 555–550 BC).¹¹ The same ostentation is also seen in the Agora, where an enormous Cycladic marble sarcophagus was discovered within a large complex of Archaic tombs, dated between 560 and 500 BC.¹² Due to its exceptional nature, at a time when graves were no longer placed within the city, this sarcophagus has been hypothesized as the tomb of the Peisistratids.¹³

Beginning in 500 BC, according to D'Agostino, the city intensifies its control over funerary manifestations, and interest in figured stelai declines; there is no hesitation even to reuse these stelai in building the walls of Athens, under Themistocles.¹⁴ Around the timeframe of 490–440 BC, the state instituted public speeches in Athens for the war dead, and was in charge of their commemoration in stone monuments, referring to the monuments that stand along the road to the Academy, sometimes bearing inscriptions,

in the area known as *demosion sema*.¹⁵

Despite the doubts raised by some scholars, it is difficult to question the existence of this space in which orators commemorated the thousands who fell in war, a place in which speeches and public celebrations served to interpret the past, express shared values and build a collective identity for the city.¹⁶ With regard to the exact location of this public cemetery, there are two possibilities. The general idea is that it was beside a road leading from the city to the Academy, but which one? Most scholars think that the cemetery was set on the wide road that issued from the Dipylon Gate, but others have suggested that it was beside the road that issued from the Leokoriou Gate, to the east of the Dipylon Gate, and ran parallel to the Academy Road deviating slightly in the direction of the demos of Hippios Kolonos. Archaeological excavations seem to indicate that the *demosion sema* was beside the former, that known as the Academy road. Thus, the establishment of this public cemetery is linked to clearly political motives: 'In establishing the *demosion sema* near the Academy road, the demos defined a new funerary space. The choice was motivated in part by the road's web of cultural associations, but it also drew a deliberate contrast with the district immediately to the east, along the Leokoriou roads where aristocratic values were celebrated. The Leokoriou roads had a noble, elite history, frequently expressed through association with horses and horsemanship. These roads were a particularly appropriate place for such aristocratic rhetoric because they were physically and conceptually linked to the hallowed ground of Hippios Kolonos, where, together with the hero-knight Kolonos, Poseidon and Athena were worshipped in their guise as horse deities.'¹⁷ Burying together those fallen in war was a custom that harked back to the Archaic practice just mentioned, where, in the mid-sixth century BC, groups linked by social and not family ties are buried together in large tumuli such as found in the Kerameikos.

While the road to the Academy had particular political and cultural importance for men, the gates of the city which opened onto routes linked with female religious activities became established as burial grounds for children: the Sacred Gate, opening the way to Eleusis; the Eriai Gates,¹⁸ leading to the sanctuary of Demeter Chloe; the Diochaes Gate, from which one could travel to the demes that hosted the Thesmophoriai and to the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron.¹⁹ Stelai construction would be resumed in the second half of the fifth century BC, and variations with respect to the Archaic stelai were to be significant.²⁰

Funerary vessels: neck-handled amphora for him, belly-handled amphora for her

In this brief review of how funerary spaces were configured with clear representations of social class, age group and gender, one specific aspect

merits more detailed attention: the use of different types of vessels (whether cinerary vases or grave markers) for men and women. This matter has been thoroughly studied by John Boardman, who analyses the evidence from the Geometric to the Classical periods.²¹ As indicated above, in the Protogeometric age, male cinerary urns were already differentiated from the female urns in shape: the former were neck-handled amphoras and the latter were belly-handled amphoras. While some have tried to explain this distribution as a possible anthropomorphization of the vessels, Boardman's suggestion is more attractive and is based on the social use of these items: the neck amphora was used primarily for storing wine or oil; the belly amphora, like the hydria, was used to transport water. The association of wine-men, water-women is easily acceptable. To this we would add that this distinction is maintained in the Geometric period, and the krater – always associated with wine – is incorporated in the male graves. Boardman's study also examines the figured representations on both types of pottery, and the data point in the same direction: scenes of *prothesis* (the corpse laid out) and *ekphora* (funeral procession) on kraters and neck amphoras are of men, and on belly amphoras they are of women.

After the seventh century BC, where the symbolic distinction between male and female graves was lost – more precisely, only adult males received formal burial – the sixth century BC resumes the former gender differentiation, and we have proof of this in a new type of pottery, a lustral vase called a loutrophoros, appearing at the end of the century.²² The association of the amphora with men and the hydria with women is again reflected in these new pottery pieces: in the loutrophoroi that portray funeral scenes, we find that male funerals are associated with amphora-loutrophoroi, and female funerals with hydria-loutrophoroi. The loutrophoroi become increasingly stylized and any practical use is abandoned; no longer having a specific lustral function, they are now used only for grave marking. This 'uselessness' for practical purposes is absolute in the marble loutrophoroi or figured loutrophoroi on stelai, by the late fifth and fourth centuries BC. Within the apparent continuity from the Geometric to the Classical period, there is a clear change from its origin as a strictly practical item, to the purely decorative sophistication of the Classical period. As Boardman concludes, while one cannot attribute all the connotations perceived in the Classical Age to funerary vessels of the Protogeometric, it is true that gender differentiation had already begun at that time.

Before concluding this section, it would be pertinent to note the problems that can be posed by symbolic codes based on gender distinctions. Although they are very useful and should be taken into account when analysing the archaeological material, they should be interpreted with caution. In the previous section, I discussed the objects deposited as grave-goods in the tombs. It is often assumed that these are related to the deceased and not to

the family members who deposited them as offerings, but where an analysis of the bones does not provide sufficient evidence, attributing a tomb to a woman or a man on the basis of the grave-goods is unwise. There is widespread consensus that the presence of a sword indicates a man's grave, but does a fibula necessarily indicate a woman's grave? What if a woman had placed her favourite fibula in her husband's grave? In fact, fibulae are found in both men's and women's graves. What archaeological studies have shown is that until successive sumptuary laws led to grave-goods being replaced by other forms of ostentation such as the stelai and statues known as *korai* and *kouroi*, the existence of women's graves containing very varied offerings of great value, generally richer than those of men, remained a constant, especially in the ninth century BC.²³

Age as represented in Greek funerary iconography

I will now focus in greater detail on the funerary monuments themselves, the *semata*, or ways of marking a grave location. According to excavations carried out in cemeteries from the Geometric era and early Archaic period in Athens, Anavyssos, Eleusis and Thera, the funerary monument at that time consisted of one simple, undressed stone, between 50 and 100 centimetres high; some of these have been found *in situ* on top of both inhumation and cremation graves. In the case of Attica, the most ancient ones are from the tenth century BC, and, logically, have no inscription at all; later markers at Thera, c. 700 BC, usually have the name of the dead engraved vertically from one end of the stone to the other.²⁴

Archaeological findings agree with literary data in reporting the widespread custom of erecting these blocks of stone over the tomb. With time, the stone gave way to the column (κίων) and to the stele (στήλη).²⁵ The most widespread burial monument of the entire Greek world, a stele can go so far as to take the shape of a small building with a figured representation of the deceased, even including background scenes with other additional figures. But the stelai of the Archaic age are relatively simple, and their decoration and evolution has been amply studied by Gisela M.A. Richter in what has become a classic work on the topic.²⁶

The stele is the most common element, but not the only possible offshoot from the earlier uninscribed markers. Also appearing in the Archaic age are statues of the deceased, either *korai*, standing maidens who are clothed, or *kouroi*, standing male youths who are nude.²⁷ From c. 600 BC we have the Dipylon *kouros*, of which only the head and right hand are preserved. This was a luxury that only the wealthiest families could afford: notable examples, which I will discuss later, include the statue of Phrasikleia and the *kouros* Kroisos. The *kouros*, votive or funerary, is an aristocratic youth,²⁸ eternally young and eternally handsome, not exemplifying any kind of homoerotic appeal, but male aristocratic excellence, *arete*.²⁹ The *korai*,

though they may have the same votive and funerary functions, are found in greater variety. Since they are clothed, there is the distinction between wearing a peplos or *chiton*, in addition to slight changes from one region to another. As of today, the monument to Phrasikleia is our only example of both *kore* and funerary inscription surviving together, and while the *kouroi* are more plentiful, the Kroisos *kouros* found at Anavyssos is also the only funerary example with an existing inscription. For this reason, I will pay special attention to both of these examples in the following chapter.

In this review of Greek funerary art, we must not overlook one highly important detail: the primitive stone erected over the tombs was a non-iconic element (a simple 'sign', *σημα*, a term used later to refer to the tombs); by contrast, bas-reliefs and statues present an image that portrays the deceased, though not in a realistic sense. This significant change, from a non-iconic to an iconic funerary element, takes place in the sixth century BC, the time of the aristocratic *poleis*. About this same time, we find another equally important novelty: a change in the placement of the funerary monument. It now occupies a more visible position, no longer necessarily atop the tumulus, but preferably along the road. Consequently, archaeologists sometimes find tumuli that include several graves, and somewhere nearby a funerary statue whose specific grave we cannot identify, though it belongs to a single family group. The principal issue is that the *sema* becomes an element of ostentation, integrated into the funerary space of a group.³⁰ Although the data is scarce, there have been attempts to trace a geography of the Archaic *kouroi* of Attica, and it seems that they are distributed along the road that goes out from Athens and crosses the Hymettus, continuing as far as Sounion, a route that has only been identified at a few points: *Myrrhinoutta* (Μυρρινοῦττα, present-day Vourva), *Myrrhinous* (Μυρρινοῦς, present-day Merenda), *Prospalta* (Πρόσπαλτα, northwest of Kalyvia), *Kephale* (Κεφαλή, east of modern Keratea). These population centres, for the most part, belong to the coastal *trittyes* of their corresponding tribe, according to Cleisthenes's reform, where a large presence of aristocratic groups is documented. In Athens itself, the geographic distribution that has been reconstructed seems to give preference to the coast, from Piraeus toward the east, toward the port of Archaic Athens, Phalerum.³¹

Kouroi and *korai* emphasize the youth of the deceased, but above all they indicate social status. *Kouroi* do not show variations according to age: pre-ephebic is not differentiated from ephebic and the absence of a beard is adopted as characteristic, accentuating the tragic nature of the *mors immatura*. There is no conflict with the evidence that the kind of age represented is not 'physiologically determined', but rather a 'historical category' of age: as in the epic *kouros*, the statue portrays the age of a socially and physically powerful figure, youth as the privilege of a warrior.³² In the *korai*, as we will see in Phrasikleia, the period of life represented in the

statue is that of *parthenos*. This moment of plenitude, and nothing else, is what the representation seeks to portray.

With regard to the stelai, there is some variation from the Archaic to the Classical Age. To begin, I will summarize the different types that are found in the Archaic Age.³³ The most common image on the Attic stelai is that of a nude young man, again a *kouros*; he may carry a spear or be characterized as an athlete. Older men are also found, represented with beards, such as the hook-nosed boxer that we see in one of the stelai recovered from the Themistoclean wall.³⁴ Thucydides, speaking of the construction of the Athens city walls, says that it was done quickly, in a make-do fashion, using all kinds of stones that had not even been dressed to fit together. In fact, he states that they made use of *πολλαί τε στήλαι ἀπὸ σημάτων καὶ λίθοι εἰργασμένοι*, 'many stelai from the tombs, and sculpted stones'.³⁵ Also famous is the stele of the warrior Aristion, clothed and armed, the work of Aristocles, found in Velanideza.³⁶ Another of the better-known stelai is the so-called Stele of the Alcmaeonids, or Brother and Sister Stele, dedicated to two siblings, a male youth and a little girl, the only Archaic Attic stele that is wholly preserved, although today it is divided between two museums.³⁷

According to Boardman, Attic stelai tend to distinguish three life-stage archetypes in the Greek man: the nude, athletic youth (characterized by the javelin, disc and *aryballos*); warrior (with sword and armour); and older man (with cane and sometimes accompanied by a dog).

In all these cases the stelai are tall and narrow, but in the late Archaic period, other, wider stelai appear, such as one that in all likelihood represents a mother and child.³⁸ Only fragments of this stele have survived – all that can be distinguished is part of the mother's face and her left hand holding the child's head. It has no precedents in the Archaic stelai of Attica, but it does show continuity in the Classical age, in the famous Ampharete stele, iconographically similar, but, thanks to the surviving epigram, we know that it actually represents a grandmother with her grandchild.³⁹



Figure 1.1 Grave stele of Aristion, c. 510 BC, found in Velanideza, Attica. National Archaeological Museum of Athens: 29 © Getty Images.

The erection of elaborate stelai in Attica ceases in the early fifth century BC and does not resume until c. 430 BC. However, construction continues in the rest of Greece, and new types appear:⁴⁰ in addition to characterization by life stage, professions appear, for example, a lyre player,⁴¹ and women of different ages are represented, such as the young girl in the Giustiniani stele,⁴² probably from Paros, or the little girl with a pair of doves in her hands, from the same island.⁴³ Another example of the splendour of funerary art in Paros is the stele of a mother, surrounded by three children and two youths that look on her with reverence.⁴⁴ Also from the first half of the fifth century BC is the famous stele from Thessaly, showing an image of two young girls with flowers.⁴⁵

Around 440–430 BC, stelai construction in Attica is resumed, and all authors concur in noting similarities between some of these stelai and certain images in the Parthenon frieze. During this period, hundreds of artisans had been working on the Acropolis in the enormous reconstruction project undertaken under Pericles; many of these artisans were also available for other artistic work such as the elaborate stelai that we speak of. There is now more variation among the stelai, and indications of age and family relationships appear: young athlete, older man with cane, woman with spinning wheel, man and wife, mother and child, etc. By contrast, there are very few individual representations of warriors, perhaps because the war dead are now honoured with state memorials. But above all, in the Classical stelai, it is interesting to note that greater attention is given to representing life stages. In the case of men, there is more than the old Homeric division *kouroi/gerontes*, and different life stages are articulated with the different male roles (childhood, ephebic status, adulthood/warrior stage, old age); in the case of women, the *kore* status continues to be quite present, with later stages now added (married woman, woman dying in childbirth, mother, old age),⁴⁶ and occasional indications of profession, though examples are few.⁴⁷



Figure 1.2 Fragment of a funerary stele depicting a child, c. 530 BC, Anavyssos, Attica. National Archaeological Museum of Athens: 4472 © Getty Images.

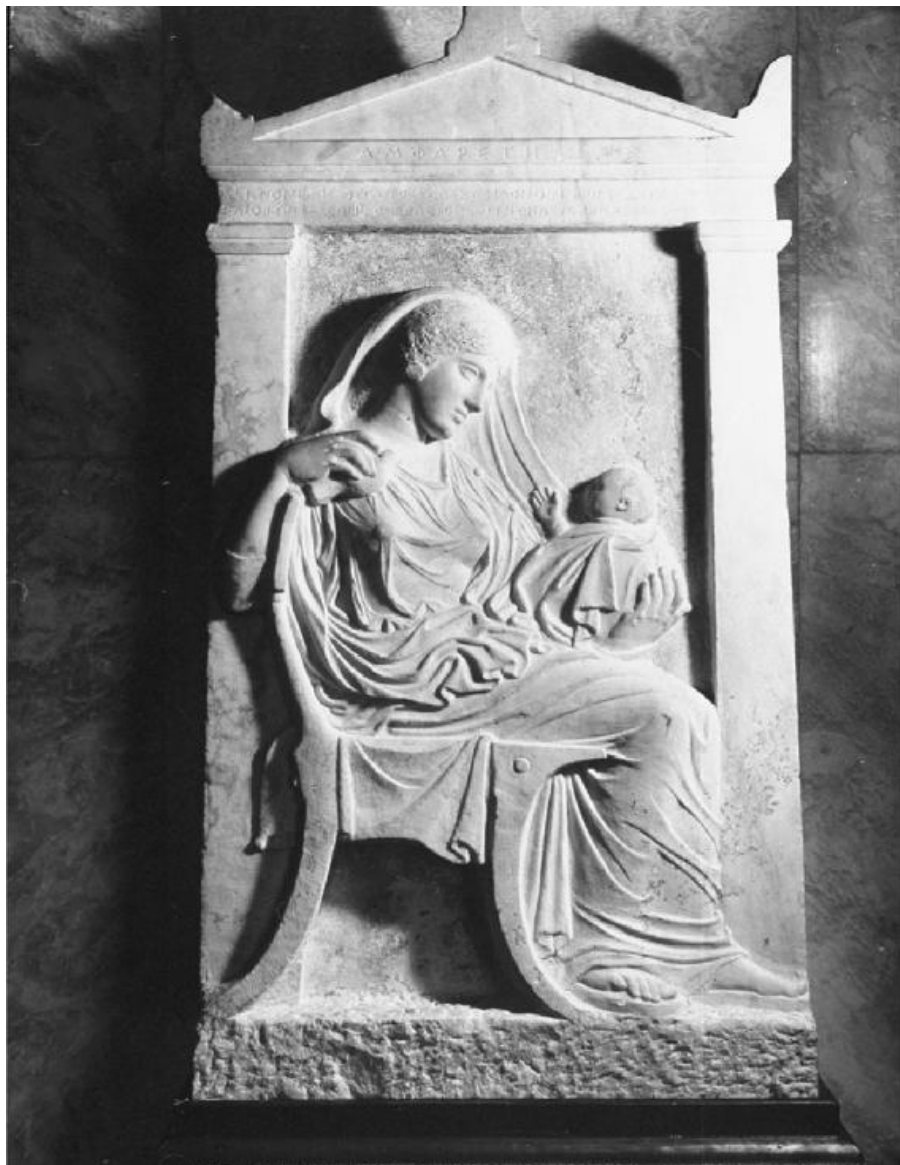


Figure 1.3 Grave stele of Ampharete, c. 430–420 bc, found in the Kerameikos. Museum of the Kerameikos: P695 © Getty Images.



Figure 1.4 Grave stele of a little girl, c. 450 BC. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; 27.45 © Getty Images.

There has been a clear change: from the Archaic funerary statues (*kouroi* and *korai*), whose primary function was celebration of the aristocratic, to the stelai of the Classical age, reflecting a new organization of the city.

Putting order in the disorder of death, *miasma*, sumptuary excess, savagery of the women

This review of the funerary landscape (especially in Attica, where most of our evidence is from) would be incomplete without noting the imprint left by certain laws and legislators who felt the need to regulate the rituals of bidding farewell to the dead.

The oldest funerary laws are attributed to Solon. Although the evidence is late, there is enough agreement to indicate a reliable tradition, or at least, the fact that already from the fourth century BC ‘Solon’s laws’ meant ‘traditional laws’. One of these ancient sources, although far from Solon’s time, is Plutarch,⁴⁸ who attributes to Solon the prohibitions of speaking ill of the dead, of sacrificing an ox on the graves, and banning women from attending strangers’ funerals and weeping excessively, beating and cutting themselves. Plutarch is also the only one who historically contextualizes Solon’s laws. According to this author, when Solon had not yet been appointed archon, the Athenians sought aid from Epimenides of Knossos, due to his fame as a sage.⁴⁹ A bloody feud had followed when Megacles’ supporters assassinated the supporters of Cylon, despite their having fled for refuge to the temple of the goddess at the acropolis, and now the city was divided and in need of purification. Apparently, the reforms proposed by Epimenides, who for example limited the lamentation of women at gravesites (καὶ τὸ σκληρὸν ἀφελὼν καὶ τὸ βαρβαρικόν, ὃ συνέιχοντο πρότερον αἱ πλεῖσται γυναῖκες, ‘elimination of the harshness and savagery that formerly characterized the behaviour of most women’),⁵⁰ were inspiration for the measures later adopted by Solon.⁵¹

As for the funerary monuments, which interest us more directly, it seems that Solon’s legislation had no effect, and that the Athenians gave no thought to the size of these monuments or the expense involved. We have already seen above how the changes in funerary monuments over the course of the sixth century BC do not reflect any restraint in expense or splendour, quite the opposite. Solon’s laws, in principle, are not verifiable through archaeology, since they seem to address primarily the anthropological aspects of the funeral ceremony.⁵² Hence, although we generally speak of ‘sumptuary laws’ when referring to funerary legislation, this idea must be reconsidered in its relation to the laws of Solon. The idea that the old laws attributed to Solon limited excessive outlay for funerary ceremonies must have appeared no earlier than the late fourth century BC, and was adopted by Demetrius of Phalerum, Cicero and Plutarch, our sources on Solon’s laws.

Then what was the function of the laws promoted by this wise Athenian legislator? New interpretations suggest that anthropological aspects were the main thrust of these laws, including that they actually regulated relations between the living and the dead.⁵³ These two are dangerously close in funerary ceremonies, and proximity to the corpse, a source of pollution or *miasma*, required that measures be taken. The women, responsible for washing and preparing the corpse, were more exposed to the contamination than men,⁵⁴ and the desire to reduce *miasma* exposure would justify some of these laws that are attributed to Solon: men and women were to walk separately during the *ekphora*⁵⁵ and this must take place before sunrise. Limitations on grave offerings can also be interpreted as the desire to separate definitively the dead from the living: it is one thing to place objects in the tomb that belonged to the deceased in life (swords, bronze fibulae, jewels, etc.) – they serve to illustrate the wealth of the *oikos* and to represent the status of the deceased. However, quite another are the offerings, oil and wine burned with the corpse or buried in the grave, the sacrifices or any other type of grave cult, practices that belong to another category and imply a relationship or exchange between the living and the dead. This is precisely the relationship that the legislation intended to break off.⁵⁶ In this respect, we can recall that offering repositories (*Opferrinnen*) disappeared over the sixth century BC, having been linked possibly to the celebration of funerary banquets and in short, with a cult of the dead.

By contrast, other aspects of funerary regulation – that lamentations could only be sung at home, not at the graveside, even the celebrated prohibition of speaking ill of the dead – had more of a political basis: to avoid any incitement to vengeance or confrontation between families. Still, agreement with this functional interpretation of Solonian funerary legislation does not keep us from recognizing its intent to put a curb on the laments of women, or in the words of Ana Iriarte, ‘the power of incitement to revenge that the ancients perceived in the extremely emotional female lamentation’.⁵⁷ While I can accept the idea that Solonian legislation has a basis in concerns of the era about *miasma* and purification, I cannot fully share in the conclusion that the main focus of the ancient laws was not women, but rather the fear of contamination from the dead, considering how closely the Greeks themselves associated women with *miasma*, and on another level, women’s lamentation with vengeance.

There is evidence of the determination with which many city-states, not only Athens, attempted to intervene through law in funeral rite practices. Although the testimonies are scarce, it is probable that between the Archaic and Classical periods, such laws in many cities were intended not to impose particular practices based on religious considerations, but to maintain a balance that was threatened by the ostentation of the aristocratic groups. In other words, although these so-called sumptuary laws put a stop to wasteful excess, in reality, this was merely a side effect of their essentially political

nature, at least in the beginning. In the case of Athens, the restrictions imposed by funerary legislation were systematically flouted at public funerals: in civic celebrations for the war dead, the *prothesis* took place in a public space, whereas Solon decreed that this should take place inside the house; the duration of the public *prothesis* was two or three days compared to one day for a private one. According to Thucydides' narrative, everyone could give the offerings they wished to their dead at state funerals, whereas Solonian law placed restrictions on such offerings. The institutionalization of public funerals clearly formed part of a process whereby the city-state placed limits on rivalries between different social groups, promoting *homonoia* and converting solidarity among family groups into solidarity among citizens.⁵⁸

In contrast to Solon's laws, later funerary laws did have an anti-sumptuary nature. Thus, between Solon's archonship (594 BC) and the laws of Demetrius of Phalerum (317/6 BC), there must have been some regulation to reduce excess in Athenian memorials, although all we have are a few imprecise comments from Cicero,⁵⁹ who alludes to certain *post aliquanto* reforms, 'some time after' the Solonian reforms. The change we speak of took place some time between the sixth and fifth centuries BC. Some authors relate the sumptuary rules to the laws of Cleisthenes, while others attribute them to Peisistratus, again based on Plutarch, who affirmed that Peisistratus preserved most of Solon's laws.⁶⁰

Be that as it may, whether a consequence of restrictive legislation or not, stelai production declined around 500 BC, as we have seen, to the point of almost disappearing. Later, beginning in 440 BC, we observe a splendid resurgence in stelai construction in Attica, to be interrupted only by Demetrius of Phalerum in the late fourth century BC, the person who put a curb on this extravagance: stelai in the form of small buildings, marble vases and statues gave way to modest columns, whose height was regulated by law, and to simple stelai.⁶¹

While the exact scope of funerary legislation is not easy to determine from the artistic evolution of the funerary monuments, there is undeniably a clear separation that can be established between monuments from the Archaic Age, especially the *kouroi* and *korai* in the sixth century BC, and the Attic stelai of the Classical period, from the middle of the fifth century BC until 317 BC. I will maintain this distinction throughout this study. Additionally, apart from funerary legislation, there are other causes that explain both the practical disappearance of stelai at the beginning of the fifth century BC, and their resurgence beginning c. 440 BC. In the former case, one can allege the state monopoly on public funerals; in the latter, the new availability of sculptors and artisans who had worked on the reconstruction of the acropolis.

The Literary Form: Tears of Simonides ... and of Pindar

Metrical epitaphs are an interesting literary form, and not only for their use of the hexameter or elegiac distich – or the much less frequent use of some other meter. Whether socially and historically, or as an artistic form, their interest lies in how they manifest one of the main characteristics of Greek literature: its conscious incorporation into tradition. In the epitaphs we find inevitable echoes of Homer, of course, but also traces of elegiac poetry – of Tyrtaeus, Archilochus, Semonides, Solon, Mimnermus, Theognis or Simonides – and of tragedy, especially of Euripides.¹ Metrical epitaphs, very appropriate for keeping alive the memory of the dead, coexist from the earliest times with prose epitaphs, which offer minimal information about the deceased: name, sometimes patronymic, occasionally the place of origin. In addition to emphasizing the literary nature of the private metrical epitaph, it will be valuable to identify how it differs from other similar genres such as the *epitaphios logos* and the public metrical epitaph in the *demosion sema*.

From the aristocratic city to the democratization of aristocratic values

Many scholars have associated the era of the Peisistratids with the success of the elegiac distich as a vehicle for the funerary epigram, at least in Attica.² Use of the elegiac distich as a literary form in funerary epigrams goes back to the mid-sixth century BC; prior to that, the hexameter was used, even in the Dorian cultural area where the elegiac *threnos* flourished.³ This contradicts the long-held theory that the threnodic origin of the elegy was precisely the motive for its use in funerary epigraphy. In effect, the accepted idea had long been that the elegy originated as a song of lament, and over time gradually adopted other types of content. However, the thematic variety that we find in the form of the elegiac distich is clear even from the earliest evidence: the same author (such as Archilochus or Simonides, to name two well-known examples) would use this meter in their poems without regard to the occasion.

Greek elegy relates to hexameter epic, but no evidence proves it to be a more recent genre. In terms of content, the earliest elegiac poets (Calinus, Archilochus, Mimnermus) composed short pieces of exhortation, personal comment and reflection. The fragments that have been preserved contain

no definitive indications that a genre of lamentatory elegy existed, but there is no consensus on the matter. Although the metrical term ἔλεγεϊον (*elegeion*) appeared at the end of the fifth century BC, derived from ἔλεγος (*elegos*), Ewen Bowie has argued that *elegos* only began to be understood as a ‘sung lament’ in the decade or so before 415 BC, suggesting that this may have happened, in part, because by the end of the fifth century BC, the elegiac couplet was regularly used for sepulchral inscriptions. But the metrical unit characteristic of sung lament was the *threnos*, not elegiac compositions.⁴ Other scholars, such as Alberto Aloni, generally tend to see an earlier connection between mourning and elegy.⁵

With that in mind, I will attempt to sketch the tradition wherein metrical epitaphs take their place, although I am inclined to think that the purely terminological debate has little meaning for this study. Some authors, as we will see in the following section on Archilochus, set up uncrossable lines between lament and laudation, but in epitaphs these lines become blurred: some contain only mourning, others only praise, but many examples include both. In other words, it seems impossible to treat these as a homogeneous corpus, such as we find with the *epitaphios logos*.⁶ In my opinion, this difficulty is due to the somewhat discontinuous nature of the corpus: the first epitaphs I will address belong to the sixth century BC (c. 560–510), after which there will be a gap, and finally a resurgence of the private epitaph in the second half of the fifth century BC (c. 440–430) and throughout the fourth century BC.⁷ The years marked by an absence of the private metrical epitaph coincided with the rise of public metrical epitaphs, the famous *polyandria*, but also with the prose genre of the *epitaphios logos*; in both cases we are dealing with *encomium* of the war dead. Since we are speaking of related forms, the definitions of all these genres are largely based on how they contrast with each other. Nicole Loraux, referring to versified public epitaphs, the *polyandria*, states that family, social and economic distinctions that might divide the Athenians disappear in the *demosion sema*; the city promised a beautiful memorial and a metrical epitaph to its valiant citizens who died in war, a privilege heretofore reserved for the aristocracy.⁸

On the other hand, the prose discourse of the *epitaphios logos* has common elements with the public epitaph, but there are also important differences, in particular, that metrical public epitaphs continued to be linked to the prestige of the epic form.⁹ It is evident that the distinctions between these related literary forms (perhaps ‘genres’ is unwarranted) have more to do with politics than with literature: as Loraux again has noted, we find these discourses at a time when the city of Athens is breaking away from its past, abandoning aristocratic society for a democratic system.¹⁰

From the perspective of the epitaphs studied here, we might say that we are witnessing a transformation of the aristocratic city, not yet to the democratic city, but to a democratization of aristocratic values over the course of the sixth century BC.¹¹ We will pass from the *korai* and *kouroi* of the

Attic necropoleis – Merenda, Anavyssos, Vourva – to the famous stelai of the Classical age. In every case, when the epitaph is preserved, it accompanies the funerary monument in giving shape to a determined ideological construction, helping to create the image of the deceased that the family or city wishes to remain. The literary classifications – sometimes too rigid in their formal approach, separating threnody from *encomium*, lamentation from praise – would be useless for this corpus, where the opportunity to mourn the dead or praise this or that virtue has more to do with social and historical reasons than with conventions of the genre.

Origins of threnody

As I have stated, studies on the literary variants of the funerary lament enter into detailed distinctions between *threnos* (θρήνος), *goos* (γόος) and *epikēdion* (ἐπικήδιον). Already in Homeric passages that sing the funerals of heroes, a difference can be perceived between the *threnos* sung by *aidoi* and the more heartrending *goos* of the women of the family; appearing later is the term *epikēdion*, a conventional, ritual song, and sung by professionals like the threnody. But the term *threnos* was used among the Greeks themselves, even from the fifth century BC, to refer generally to the idea of ‘lament’, and the idea that funerary song can incorporate elements of *encomium* is also ancient.¹²

I have already mentioned the difficulties entailed in establishing the existence of a particular genre of elegy, the lamentatory elegy, and in determining when and why the poetry of funerary lament became associated with this metrical form, the elegiac couplet. There is one aspect of this complex discussion that I think is somewhat artificial, namely the attempt to decisively separate the lament from exhortation, praise or consolation. A major objection to the existence of a tradition of threnodic elegy, as we will see immediately, is that the oldest preserved fragments have more of a gnomic and consolatory content than what is strictly understood as threnody. This obstacle is overcome simply with a more relaxed conception of the term. Threnody may have been a vehicle for philosophical reflection on human life, giving rise in turn to the non-threnodic, purely philosophical elegy and to the elegiac epigram of funerary epitaphs.¹³ Obviously, this does not mean denying that there are differences between threnody and elegy, but rather attempting to see where the two poetic forms could at some point converge.

One well-known elegy by Archilochus, often cited when speaking of the origins of threnody, may serve to illustrate these lines of thought. The subject of these verses is the death at sea of some of the poet’s fellow citizens:

κήδεα μὲν στονόεντα Περικλέες οὔτε τις ἀστῶν
μεμφόμενος θαλίῃς τέρψεται οὐδὲ πόλις·

τοῖους γὰρ κατὰ κῦμα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης
 ἔκλυσεν, οἶδαλέους δ' ἄμφ' ὀδύνῃς ἔχομεν
 πνεύμονας, ἀλλὰ θεοὶ γὰρ ἀνηκέστοισι κακοῖσιν
 ὦ φίλ' ἐπὶ κρατερὴν τλημοσύνην ἔθεσαν
 φάρμακον. ἄλλοτε ἄλλος ἔχει τόδε· νῦν μὲν ἐς ἡμέας
 ἐτράπεθ, αἱματόεν δ' ἔλκος ἀναστένομεν,
 ἐξαῦτις δ' ἐτέρους ἐπαμείψεται. ἀλλὰ τάχιστα
 τλήῃτε, γυναικεῖον πένθος ἀπωσάμενοι.

*Pericles, lamentable sorrows no man or city can keep
 Reproaching and still enjoy the pleasures of feasting.
 Such men were submerged beneath waves of the sounding sea;
 We the survivors have lungs swollen with pain.
 The gods, however, my friend, have a remedy for incurable evils—
 To bear up with strong endurance. These things
 Happen to all men sooner or later. Now it has
 Turned against us and we groan at our bloody wound.
 Soon it will be others' turn. So let us with all speed
 Put away from us womanish grief and endure.*¹⁴

The fact that, at the end of the poem, Archilochus invites us to put away grief (specifically, ‘womanish grief’ γυναικεῖον πένθος) is the argument offered by Gentili and others to not accept this poem as threnody, in a strict sense: when Plutarch includes some of the verses from this elegy in *De audiendis poetis* 23b,¹⁵ and introduces them with the term *threnein* (θρηνεῖν), he uses the term in a rhetorical and non-technical sense, according to this Italian scholar.¹⁶ However, if we understand ‘threnody’ in a more general sense, as a kind of philosophical and consolatory poem, this example from Archilochus would be a precedent.¹⁷ The truth is that this elegy is certainly similar to metrical epitaphs both in theme (death at sea, the loss to the city,¹⁸ the universality of death) and in lexicon (ὀδύνη, ‘bitter pain’; στένω, ‘mourning’; πένθος, ‘grief’).

Singing victories and funerals

We find more solid ground when approaching Simonides and Pindar, names that have traditionally been associated with the fame of the lyrical dirge. These two are our only source of remaining fragments passed on as threnody.¹⁹

Simonides (c. 556–468 BC), one of the nine lyrical poets of the Alexandrian canon, composed threnody, *encomia*, epigrams, paeans, and even tragedies, if we believe the *Suda* encyclopedia. There is also an established tradition whereby he was the inventor (the Greeks’ well-loved figure of the *protos heurètes*) of mnemonics, making him a key figure in the process of popularizing remembrance.²⁰ A native of Ceos, one of the Cyclades, he soon moved to Athens, to the court of Hipparchus. It seems that he was the first to compose odes for the victors of sporting games celebrated by the Greeks –

making men the object of song, not only their gods – and was also the first to be paid for it: his services were especially sought after by the powerful Scopadae families in Thessaly, and the courts of Hiero in Syracuse and Theron in Agrigento in Sicily, in addition to the Peisistratids. As the author of threnodies and funeral elegies, Simonides was highly celebrated – recall Catullus’s familiar words, *maestius lacrimis Simonideis*, ‘more sorrowful than the tears of Simonides’ (38.78) – with the drawback that a large number of non-authentic funerary epigrams were indiscriminately attributed to him.²¹

Simonides achieved great fame for his poems related to the Persian Wars. Especially well-known is his *encomium* – so called by his recorder Diodorus – for the fallen in Thermopylae:

τῶν ἐν Θερμοπύλαις θανόντων
 εὐκλεῆς μὲν ἂ τύχα, καλὸς δὲ πότμος,
 βωμὸς δὲ τάφος, πρὸ γόων δὲ μνάστις, ὁ δοῖκτος ἔπαινος
 ἐντάφιον δὲ τοιοῦτον οὐτέυρως
 οὐθὸ πανδαμάτωρ ἀμαυρώσει χρόνος· ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν ὅδε σηκὸς οἰκέταν εὐδοξίαν
 Ἑλλάδος εἴλετο· μαρτυρεῖ δὲ καὶ Λεωνίδα,
 Σπάρτας βασιλεὺς, ἀρετᾶς μέγαν λελοιπῶς
 κόσμον ἀέναόν τε κλέος.

*Of those who died at Thermopylae glorious is the fortune and fair the doom. For tomb they have an altar, for lamentations they have remembrance, for pity praise. Such a funeral rite nor rust nor all-conquering time shall obliterate. This holy place of noble men has won the glory of Hellas as its household spirit. Leonidas, too, is witness, the king of Sparta, who has left a great ornament of valour and an everlasting fame.*²²

This poem by Simonides shows elements that would become distinctive of the *epitaphios logos*: the collective, not individual, audience, and the explicit preference for praise, in lieu of mourning. Simonides has his affinity with Homer, of course, but he already offers an idea of immortal fame approaching that of the Athenian *epitaphios*. As Eva Stehle has demonstrated in her study of the elegy for the fallen at Plataea, Simonides presents fame in a new way: the *kleos* of the soldiers fallen in battle has two anchors, one attached to tombs, cult and statue, the other to narrative. Fame becomes something more material and no longer depends entirely on the song of the poet.²³ It has also been noted that the Plataea elegy offers a glimpse of a new type of poetry: encomiastic narrative elegy that celebrates contemporary historical events.²⁴ Curiously, Simonides’ ninth epigram is also thought to refer to the Spartans who fell at Plataea, once again revealing the important role of this poet at a very attractive historical moment, when new ideas are coming to the surface. In this epigram, Simonides says this of the fallen soldiers: ‘they died but they are not dead: their valor bestows glory upon them here above / and leads them up from the house of Hades’. According to Sarah I. Johnston, the most significant aspect of this poem is the expression ἀνάγει δῶματος ἐξ Αἵδεω, ‘leads up from the House of Hades’, a phrase used in the invocation of souls in the classical period, making this epigram ‘one of

our earliest literary attestations of the idea that the dead could be made to rise up from the Underworld'.²⁵

Pindar (c. 518–438 BC), author of hymns, paeans, dithyrambs, partheneia, threnodies, etc., owes his fame to the preservation of four books where the Alexandrians collected and ordered their epinicia. Once again, as in the case of Simonides, we find that his patrons were the powerful families of all Hellas, from Sicily to Rhodes, from Thessaly to Cyrene.²⁶ As early as 498 BC he was commissioned to write an epinicion (*Pythian* 10) for the victor of the boys' double foot race, a youth from the Aleuadae family of Thessaly. As has been noted, Athens scarcely appears in his odes, since the artist was at the service of the aristocrats, not the democrats: we can cite only *Pythian* 7, in honour of the Alcmaeonid Megacles, and *Nemean* 2, for Timodemus, from the Timodemids family, of the Attic deme of Acharnae.²⁷ In his threnodic fragments he combines lament and praise, adapting his form to the ancient definition of threnody: ὁδυρμὸν γὰρ ἔχει σὺν ἐγκωμίῳ τοῦ τελευτήσαντος, 'combining lament with *encomium* of the dead'.²⁸

Fragments of Pindaric threnodies are quite rare, and attempts to attribute one of them to funerary lament for the tyrants of Sicily have been unfruitful. It is impossible to know whether the poet sang the death of Theron or of Gelo of Syracuse, but the powerful families of the era, the Alcmaeonid in Athens, the Aleuads in Thessaly and the Dinomenids and the Emmenids in Sicily, would celebrate not only victories but also funerals, for propaganda purposes.²⁹

I understand that, beyond the specific tyrannical dynasties, members of the wealthy aristocratic families took care to offer beautiful memorials and quality epitaphs for their dead. Thus, a magnificent stele discovered in 1988 in Ialysos, Rhodes, dated c. 470–460 BC, and contemporaneous with Pindar's *Olympian* 7, commissioned for Diagoras of Rhodes, celebrates a member of one of the powerful families of the island's aristocracy.³⁰

The importance of Pindar in this context resides in the fact that his *threnoi* show similarities with the Homeric lament and with the Archaic epigram, while at the same time presenting the key characteristic of self-assertion as a genre related to other performance genres but independent and self-contained.³¹

Tears for the aristocracy

Pindar and Simonides were both quite aware of the value of their art. As Bruno Gentili indicates, their art was grounded in a direct relationship between patron and poet, and reached its era of splendour in the sixth and fifth centuries BC. Gentili affirms that the same may be said of other arts such as painting and sculpture, because the aristocrat and the tyrant were able to consolidate their power by becoming patrons who granted gifts and honorariums to poets and artists, who in turn became 'aulic' professionals.³²

Perhaps this is the moment to pause and consider the term ‘aristocracy’, having used it already on many occasions, and keeping in mind that aristocracy and aristocrats will be repeatedly mentioned as the beneficiaries and the subject of memorials, especially in the following chapter dealing with funerary monuments of the Archaic age.

I am well aware of the drawbacks of using a term that has been the subject of many studies, and of the risk of referring to a category that is not immutable. Nonetheless, after reading Gregory Nagy’s helpful discussion on this point, I believe it is justifiable to refer to an aristocratic group (I will avoid using the term ‘class’) as the clear focus of this funerary art.³³ Nagy states that the elements that come together to define this category are ‘power’, ‘wealth’ and ‘prestige’, and of course, the criteria of noble birth must also be included. But both the power and the wealth that are assumed in this social group, and are the outward expression of prestige, are surrounded by a moral and almost divine aura, a superior lifestyle, dedicated to luxury. Nagy mentions some of the characteristics of ‘male aristocratic’ life:³⁴ ‘wearing royal purple and using perfumes’, ‘wearing elaborate hairstyles’, ‘owning horses’, ‘hunting as a sport’, ‘participating in athletic competitions’, ‘professing homoerotic ideals’ and ‘having proper instruction’. Clearly, the epitaphs that I will examine here cannot incorporate all these activities in their distichs, but we will see that, when the funerary stele is preserved, many of these aristocratic practices are reflected iconographically.

As we progress from the funerary monuments of nobles throughout the sixth century BC to the Attic stelai of the late fifth and fourth centuries BC – retrospective funerary art that serves as a vehicle for certain social ideas – it seems fundamental that the Greek idea of ‘aristocracy’, of ‘nobility’, is not propagated top down, from the higher levels of society to the rest, but is a matter of shared values that permeate all social strata, as Gregory Nagy states. The ideal of nobility (excellence as expressed in the term *arete*) is shared and is by no means the property of a certain group. Therefore, Nagy concludes by establishing the widespread presence of so-called aristocratic ideals in democracy, or in other words, the full democratization of these ideals in the fourth century BC.³⁵

Helpful in this regard is this author’s analysis of the literary *encomium*³⁶ – Pindar singing the praise of Hiero, Bacchylides comparing the same Hiero to Lydian king Kroisos, Pindar once again painting tyranny black so he can sing of a Theban oligarchy – leading Nagy to the following conclusion: in all encomiastic poetry, the *laudator* composes his praise using the aristocratic ideal as his reference, regardless of whether the *laudandus* is an oligarch, a democrat or a tyrant.³⁷ Unlike Theognis, who sings aristocratic values in his elegies with frequent contrasts of *agathoi* (ἀγαθοί) and *kakoi* (κακοί), the nobles versus those of low estate, Pindar simply overlooks the latter: he affirms the superiority of the *agathoi*, of the nobles as a group, without any

Acquiring wealth to use wealth, using wealth to gain honor

Museums in the Western world are full of objects with which Greek nobles sought prestige and extravagance: tripods, weapons, bronze cauldrons, funerary stelai.³⁹ The aristocrat attains his position in society by investing his wealth in obtaining prestige. Prestige is not attained by having wealth, but the wealth must be used to obtain the desired social recognition. In this regard, two pertinent passages from Pindar have been noted:⁴⁰

εἰ δέ τις ξνδον νέμει πλοῦτον κρυφαῖον,
ἄλλοισι δέμπίπτων γελᾷ, ψυχὰν Ἀῖδᾶ τελέων
οὐ φράζεται δόξας ἄνευθεν.

*But, if any one broodeth at home over hoarded wealth, and rejoiceth in oppressing others, he little thinketh that he is giving up his soul to death – death without glory.*⁴¹

οὐκ ἔραμαι πολὺν ἐν
μεγάρῳ πλοῦτον κατακρύψαις ἔχειν,
ἀλλέόντων εὖ τε παθεῖν καὶ ακοῦ-
σαι φίλοις ἐξαρκέων.

*I love not to keep much wealth buried in my hall, but of my abundance to do good to myself and to win a good name by bestowing it on my friends.*⁴²

The following passage from Plutarch, regarding what Gorgias said of Cimon, must be understood in the same sense: τὸν Κίμωνα τὰ χρήματα κτᾶσθαι μὲν ὡς χρῶτο, χρᾶσθαι δὲ ὡς τιμῶτο, ‘he acquired wealth to use wealth, and used wealth to gain honours’.⁴³

There will be opportunity to see how the dedicants of some of these memorials commissioned famous sculptors, such as Aristion of Paros, Aristocles and Phaidimos the Clever, thus displaying willingness to pay for a work of art to perpetuate the fame of the deceased, and by doing so, often perpetuating their own.⁴⁴ These were beautiful monuments, *made to be seen*, as some of them remind us in their verses.

Back to funerary epigrams

So it is that the *agathoi*⁴⁵ seek immortal fame for their dead, with beautiful memorials especially for youths like Kleitos, who *though noble, he died* (καλὸς ὃν ἔθανε⁴⁶), and they illustrate them with refined epitaphs that I will not label with any specific term, but that partake of the threnody and the *encomium* and do so in terms deeply rooted in an entire literary tradition. We can join in Gentili’s idea that the burial epigram was not in itself a lamentation for the deceased, engraved on the tomb, but rather an

exhortation to a proper mourning for the dead: 'un complemento necessario della tomba per serbare tra i vivi e, in taluni casi, per affidare ai posteri la memoria del defunto'.⁴⁷ Aside from the literary reasons, there were very good practical reasons that made the elegiac distich the most suitable instrument for the epigram-inscription: it is a closed form, autonomous and expressive, a poetic form condensed into two verses, able to meet the restrictions imposed by the physical base, in this case, the base of the statue or stele.⁴⁸

Memorials were made to be seen, epitaphs to be read. With this self-evident remark, I refer to the fact that, unlike the *threnos* or the *goos*, the two forms of lament already present in the Homeric epic, the funerary epigram is distant from the moment of death and from the funeral. It is sung neither at the funeral ceremony nor in the celebrations that might take place in the days following. It is planned and written for the future, and this distancing is reflected, for example, in the use of *pote* (πότε), 'then, in former times' in some of the inscriptions. This use, discussed later in relation to the epitaph of young Kroisos,⁴⁹ reveals that the time of reference is not the young man's death; instead, the future reader is in mind, in short, the one who would keep the *kleos* (κλέος) alive. There is no other way to understand the words of Hecuba in the lamentation (*threnos*, *goos*, *encomion*)⁵⁰ sung by Astyanax, when the queen asks what the poet might write on the child's tomb. She herself responds:

τὸν παῖδα τόνδ' ἔκτειναν Ἀργεῖοί ποτε
δείσαντες; αἰσχρὸν τοῦπίγραμμά γ' Ἑλλάδι.

*This boy was killed in former times by the Argives because they feared him: A shameful epigram for Hellas.*⁵¹

These words from Euripides clearly illustrate what an epitaph is: A brief but accurate funerary inscription, conceived in order to keep alive the memory of the deceased, reborn with each reading, relying on fame as a promise of immortality. Today's insistence that there is no such thing as writing without a reader, or put differently, that reading is a part of the text itself, is clearly exemplified in the Greek epitaphs, especially in those of the Archaic age, at times composed in the first person, awaiting the passer-by who would stop and lend them his voice.⁵²

These last considerations have to do with *performance*, and on this point it is essential to consider the work of Joseph W. Day. At the start of this chapter I insisted that we are dealing with literary texts, but this is certainly not a closed question. Day accurately summarizes: 'If earlier Greeks did not often take epigrams seriously as poetic texts, however, they may still have conceived of them as poems, but in a functional rather than a literary or aesthetic sense'.⁵³ The idea that the inscription formed an integral part of a monument's design, and that the artist who created it sought to attract

potential readers and guide their reading, is also applicable to funerary monuments such as those of Phrasikleia and Kroisos, which I will study in the next chapter. Engraved on the base of statues of great artistic quality, sometimes signed by the artists who wrought them, epigrams make use of formulas and expressions from the language of oral poetry and are thus steeped in its same values and authority; at the same time, the physical arrangement of the inscription steers the potential reader's gaze towards the poem's key idea, as in the case of Kroisos' epitaph, where the expression *thouros Ares* (Θοῦρος Ἄρης), which has evident Homeric echoes, appears in eye-catching isolation, occupying the entire last line.

In my estimation, the epitaphs to be analysed here constitute a homogeneous corpus, and studying them as a group is justified, despite the seemingly arbitrary division between the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic ages. My object of study is the Archaic and Classical funerary epigrams, and I believe that here we discover less standardized, less conventional emotions than in later periods,⁵⁴ which also have been studied in more depth.⁵⁵ In fact, the criticism is sometimes heard that the corpus of funerary epigraphy in general is repetitive, given to formulas. And yet, in quite a few texts that I study here, it may be said that there are new expressions (new in the absence of further archaeological discoveries), very elaborate literary allusions, evocative proper nouns, and so on. Therefore, we insist not only on their quality but also on their often exceptional nature.

Before closing this chapter, I wish to remind the reader that the corpus studied here contains only the metrical epitaphs, and I refer only to these when making such literary considerations. As for how representative these may be in relation to the totality of funerary epigraphy, the facts differ between the Archaic and Classical ages. In the Archaic age, metrical epitaphs make up nearly half the total, a very high proportion, and certainly much higher than that found in the Classical age, when the number of epitaphs in verse is ten times less.⁵⁶ These statistics refer to Attica, where the most plentiful and most studied inscriptions are found; it is significant that, in the Archaic age, there is such a high percentage of epitaphs in verse, more than in any other era and in any other part of Greece. However, the global statistics hide the details, and we must pause a moment to examine how this developed over the Archaic era. The number of epitaphs in verse reaches its highest percentage in the early sixth century BC, and we may perhaps attribute this to the influence and prestige of epic, where the aristocratic group (the subject of these epitaphs) is reflected (recall that the first metrical epitaphs use the hexameter). The practice of inscribing grave markers becomes increasingly common in the second half of the century, and the proportion of those who choose to mark the grave monument with a prose epitaph, usually just a name, equals or becomes greater than the group that prefers verse.

By way of conclusion, epitaph evidence from the Archaic age (specifically,

the sixth century BC) is splendid from the literary standpoint, and when the monument is preserved, also from the artistic standpoint. But these epitaphs are not exceptional in the sense of being uncommon; the metrical epitaph was the norm. However, when the practice of the private epitaph is recovered in the mid-fifth century BC, metrical funerary epigrams take on added value, being exceptional in a time when the prose epitaph had become usual.

Phrasikleia, *Forever a Maiden*. Kroisos, *Whom Raging Ares Destroyed*

In the following pages I examine memorials from the Archaic age, paying special attention to two exceptional pieces, the funerary monuments of the maiden Phrasikleia and of young Kroisos. These are representative examples of funerary *korai* and *kouroi* – splendid, idealized images that the aristocrats dedicated to their young people who died in the prime of life. This idealization should not surprise us, if we consider that as early as the Homeric poems, the funerary monument was referred to as the *sema* (although these early uses did not refer to statues); and this *sema*, together with *kleos*, fame, was all that remained of the deceased on earth. The two monuments selected are not only representative of youth memorials in the Archaic age, but also of funerary art from this period in general, since most funerary monuments of the time were raised by parents for their children, both sons and daughters, who died in their youth.¹

The Archaic epigrams that I shall discuss here amply illustrate the different ways in which the epigrammatic texts, together with the funeral monument, engage the passer-by, the potential reader. As mentioned in the first chapter, the memorials were sited in public places and were intended to be seen. The meaning of the epigrams must be interpreted in light of the contextual information available: the material and spatial context, the religious context, the political context and the literary context. Clearly, not all of this information is present in all of the epigrams.² Another key aspect is the kind of dialogue established between the epigram and the passer-by. For example, the speaker may be the monument itself, although it is sometimes hard to differentiate between the monument and the deceased; conversely, there are examples in which the deceased is the subject to whom the epigram is addressed. The speaker may also be an ‘anonymous mourner’ and the epigram phrased in the imperative, demanding that an ‘anonymous passer-by’ stop.³ As we shall see, it is not always easy to determine the subjects of the dialogue, but what is clear is that the funeral epigrams were meant to be read, rendering them something of a curiosity at a time when Greek literature was still an essentially oral form.

In cases where the complete memorial has survived, preserving both the inscription and the statue or stele, it is possible to establish how text and image complemented and mutually reinforced each other. The memorial to Phrasikleia, with which this chapter begins, is a perfect example: the epitaph explicitly states that the young woman has died before marriage, and this

fact is echoed in the statue, where she is depicted adorned as a bride. The idea of representing a young woman who has died before marriage as a 'bride of Hades', only hinted at in the memorial to Phrasikleia, becomes explicit in a young woman's epitaph from the island of Kos and dated to the end of the fourth century BC. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first instance of use of the expression 'bride of Hades'.

The memorial to Kroisos, if the epitaph to Kroisos really does belong to the *kouros* found in Anavyssos, is as exceptional a case as that of Phrasikleia, since the entire funerary monument has been preserved together with its inscription. The epigram is a private epitaph for a young man killed in battle. In the corpus collected by Hansen, which forms the basis of my study, epigrams for the war dead account for almost one-seventh of the total. Together with death in childbirth and death at sea, death in battle is the exception to an unwritten rule whereby Archaic and Classical epitaphs did not indicate the cause of death. After the Persian Wars, private epitaphs for young men killed in combat were displaced by public epitaphs, the *polyandria*. However, memorials raised by parents to commemorate sons whose lives were cut short in battle, such as that of Kroisos, have survived from the sixth century BC, and especially the second half.

In this chapter devoted to the Archaic period, attention is also paid to the Brother and Sister stele, or the Stele of the Alcmaeonids. In this case, it is not a statue but a very well-conserved stele with a partially preserved inscription.

Hence, I will discuss a representative selection of Archaic memorials, mainly from Attica. As I noted in the first chapter, the erection of elaborate stelae in this region ceased in the early fifth century BC and did not resume until c. 430 BC. Although this kind of memorial continued to be constructed in other parts of Greece, I have taken Attica as my place of reference; consequently, this temporary gap is also reflected in the presentation of this study.

Aristocratic *sema* (monument) and *kleos* (fame)

During the Archaic age, in addition to the monument's deictic function, *sema* (σῆμα), a mnemonic function is gradually incorporated, *mnema* (μνήμα, a term that never appears in Homer in reference to the funerary monument), corresponding to a growing interest in remembrance and fame.⁴ Jean-Pierre Vernant linked this fact to the heroic epic, observing that *kouroi* and stelai with reliefs develop particularly in the sixth century BC, and he sought to identify the social, psychological and aesthetic conditions that could have prompted such a change from primitive, non-iconic elements such as stones and columns. The epic song, with its social memory function, enabled the deceased to be remembered; now the erection of a funerary monument transforms the individual who has perished into a figure whose presence is

thus engraved in the group memory. In Attica, these *kouroi* have a clearly aristocratic nature; they visually proclaim the young person's glory just as epic poetry sang his feats: *parole poetique (mémoire par l'oreille)* in the former case, *monument funéraire (mémoire par les yeux)*⁵ in the latter. One indication of this heroization⁶ may also be found in the size of the monuments, no longer the 'colossal' images of that 'divine stature' spoken of in the literary texts and familiar to us in Daedalic-type sculptures. Instead, the statues are only slightly larger than life: The funerary statue of Phrasikleia, without its base, measures 1.71 metres, and the *kouros* found beside her measures 1.94 metres, the same as the Kroisos effigy.⁷ While giving credit to Vernant for emphasizing the move from an aniconic to an iconic monument, and for articulating this idea in relation to sixth-century BC aristocratic culture, it has been well understood by all scholars of antiquity that the funerary monument and poet's verses had the greatest value in keeping alive the fame of the deceased.⁸

The *kouros* of a young male represented an elite youth, the *kalos kai agathos* youth of aristocracy. As for females, it seems that only women who died prior to marriage could display a *kore* over their tomb, a fact that reveals the special importance of *parthenos* in Ancient Greece, particularly when referring to maidens from the aristocratic group.⁹

Quite a small social circle is represented by those who receive such honours (always young people), given that few families could afford the expense of such monuments. Along these lines, it has been noted that a large number of Archaic memorials from Attica, dedicated to noble youths – sons and daughters of landholders from the time of Peisistratus and the Peisistratids – are not found in the large cemeteries near the capital, but in private burial grounds throughout Attica, probably near the demes where their respective families lived.¹⁰ The few surviving funerary monuments from this era with both image (statue or stele) and epigram have been associated with the Alcmaeonid family, as we shall see, although such hypotheses should be viewed with caution.

Phrasikleia, *forever a maiden*

In contrast to the numerous *kouroi*, funerary *korai* are quite few in number,¹¹ adding even more interest to the statue of the maiden Phrasikleia, found alongside a *kouros* that may be dedicated to her brother. Both belong to the most fully developed period of the Archaic style;¹² and in the maiden's case, we also have the epitaph that accompanied the statue. According to the inscription, the maiden receives from the gods the name of *kore*, in lieu of (ἀντί) marriage:

(i, on the front of the base)

σῆμα Φρασικλείας. | κόρε κεκλέσσομαι | αἰεὶ,
ἀντὶ γάμο | παρὰ θεῶν τοῦτο | λαχὼ σ' ὄνομα.

(ii, on the right side)

Ἀριστίων Πάρ¹ [ος μ' ἐπ]ο[ίε]  ε.13

*Tomb of Phrasikleia. Maiden is how I shall always be called,
instead of a marriage, from the gods I have attained this name.
Aristion of Paros made [me].*

In form, the epitaph is an elegiac couplet engraved without any separation between words, the oldest example of Attic inscription in *stoichedon* (στοιχηδόν), that is, with capital letters lined up both horizontally and vertically.¹⁴ A passer-by stopping before this image would lend his or her voice to the young Phrasikleia, or to her statue, as the epigram is somewhat ambiguous in this respect. The basic information (name and premature death before marriage) is clear in the epigram and is reinforced by the statue; the use of the first person adds pathos and engages the reader emotionally.

In the text we find an allusion to the Homeric ‘Hymn to Aphrodite’, where the poet refers to Hestia, one of the goddesses who are able to resist Aphrodite’s power. The virgin goddess is called *kore* (v. 21), and it is explicitly stated that Zeus granted this lovely *geras* in lieu of a wedding, *anti gamoio* (v. 29: τῇ δὲ πατὴρ Ζεὺς δῶκε καλὸν γέρας ἀντὶ γάμοιο). In Phrasikleia’s epitaph, *lanchanein* (λαγχάνειν), ‘receive as a batch’, belongs to the vocabulary of distribution, just as does *geras*, ‘honour’.¹⁵ In addition to the allusion to Hestia, there is also the obvious relationship to mythical Kore, the maiden daughter of Demeter.¹⁶ As a common noun, the use of *kore* in epitaphs does not seem to be random; on the contrary, it emphasizes youth and filiation, especially on the paternal side. It is obvious that a maiden who dies before marriage is also a *parthenos*, but the terms are not equivalent: As Pierre Chantraine notes, *kore* (κόρη) is often a synonym of *thygater* (θυγάτηρ), ‘daughter’, but is rarely a synonym for *parthenos* (παρθένος).¹⁷ If Phrasikleia had not been snatched away by death, her father would have been the one to arrange a suitable marriage for her.

As we shall see, the iconographic elements that stand out in this *kore* are typical of a bride, but for now I will only point out that Phrasikleia’s epitaph represents a very early example of the death–marriage association found in the case of maidens, not to become generalized until the Hellenistic period.¹⁸ The inscription on the base of the statue was published in 1828. Much later, in 1972, in the Attic deme of Myrrhinous (present-day Merenda), the *sema* was discovered, the statue of a maiden with her right arm extended alongside her body, her hand slightly pulling out the folds of the *chiton* tunic, and left forearm crossing her chest horizontally, holding a flower. She wears a necklace (apparently of pomegranates, but they may be lotus), earrings, two bracelets, and a crown of flowers consisting of open lotus blossoms and lotus buds. Its excellent state of preservation suggests that it was buried shortly after being sculpted, undoubtedly to avoid its destruction. Both the

assumed date of this *kore*, about 540 BC, and the ceramics found with it, exclude a possible threat from the Persian Wars. Instead, the 540 BC date is probably tyrant Peisistratus' return to Athens, and the expulsion of the Alcmaeonids. After studying the epigram and statue together, Jesper Svenbro recalls the obsession of the Alcmaeonid family, from one generation to the next, for names derived from the root *kleos* – Megacles, Cleisthenes, Pericles – and from this he supposes that the maiden Phrasikleia might belong to that family.¹⁹

However, it is also possible that Phrasikleia belonged to the circle of another powerful family of the period, that of Peisistratus. This possibility is based on the idea that Aristion of Paros, the artist who created her funerary statue, was also the one whose signature appears on the Siphnian treasury in Delphi.²⁰ Recall that Peisistratus was restored to power in Athens with the aid of the Naxian aristocrat Lygdamis; Peisistratus then returned the favour, helping Lygdamis to exercise tyranny in Naxos and Paros, where the latter launched an ambitious building program. Aristion of Paros would have been associated with the sphere of power of these tyrants (not only Lygdamis of Naxos, but also Thrasybulus of Miletus and Peisistratus of Athens himself). Understandably, the Alcmaeonids would have attempted to erase all traces of the cultural accomplishments achieved by the tyrants. The funerary figure of Phrasikleia survived, but the inscription was obliterated.²¹

In any case, Phrasikleia, unmarried maiden, would belong to the aristocratic class. We may consider that her father (the paternal link noted earlier in the term *kore*) raised two magnificent funerary statues for her and her brother. The death of a young female noble would mean a loss to her father, given her value as a means of exchange and alliance through marriage,²² and for the whole city, as poems by Hellenistic epigrammatist Posidippus of Pella would continue to attest several centuries later.²³

Along these lines, in addition to my other comments on *korai* and *kouroi*, we can also make some observations about their different *postures* towards the observer: in contrast to both votive and funerary *kouroi*, the *korai* seem to be involved in a relationship with the spectator: they offer or show gifts (a flower, a piece of fruit, a bird), suggesting an exchange, and reminding us that 'the woman's value was intimately connected to her being "given" in marriage, so the *kore* acquires, creates, value by the exchange with the viewer which the frontal gaze insists upon'.²⁴ While these words refer especially to the more numerous votive *korai*, I consider them to be equally valid for Phrasikleia. The image of Phrasikleia is a young girl with flowers, very common in Greek iconography: gathering flowers was associated with *parthenos*, with prenuptial rites and marriage, and also with Persephone. If it is true that the Phrasikleia's necklace is made of pomegranates (some authors consider them to be lotus flowers),²⁵ this would be yet another connection with Persephone as the bride of Hades. If we bring to mind that in the Greek mentality, marriage constituted a woman's fulfilment, then

death prior to marriage was a death prior to that fulfilment, and the metaphor 'bride of Hades' articulates that perception.²⁶

The girl holds a lotus flower in her left hand and this detail has been interpreted in different ways. Svenbro recalls that the lotus flower behaves like the fire of hearth and home: the blossom closes at sunset and opens again at the light of day. Phrasikleia shows a lotus blossom, a blossom that is reborn, just as the home fire and just as the *kleos*, her own and that of her family. Furthermore, he supports this reading in a reinterpretation of the girl's name: if we accept the indications of Pierre Chantraine in his etymological dictionary, the name would mean 'famous for her thoughts',²⁷ but *phrasi-* can also be derived from φράσαι, φράσασθαι, Aorist infinitives of φράζειν, φράζεσθαι, 'calling attention to', whereby the girl's name would mean 'the one who calls attention to fame, to *kleos*'. Svenbro interprets the fact that the lotus flower in her hand is closed as a metaphorical indication that the girl's fame remains silent – closed – until the reader reads the epigram. Another, non-exclusive interpretation is that the closed lotus blossom alludes to the girl's unwedded state, dead before coming into full 'blossom'.²⁸ However, a more plausible interpretation in my opinion is that the lotus blossom, which closes at night and opens at dawn, represents an alternation between life and death, a very clear symbol in Egyptian funerary imagery. This motif is similar to that of the 'smelled flower', which I shall return to later in this chapter when discussing the Brother and Sister stele.



Figure 3.1 The Phrasikleia *kore*, c. 540 BC, Attica. National Archaeological Museum of Athens: 4889 © Getty Images.

The Phrasikleia *kore* is not realistic, but rather a symbolic representation of the woman's moment of perfection, in the same way that the *kouros* is the image of masculine perfection attained on the battle field. Thus, the girl's exquisite adornment and her crown evoke a bride, as if the maiden had dressed for her wedding just when death overtakes her. This image will reappear in tragedies – maidens who are about to die or to be sacrificed are dressed in wedding attire – and it has also been studied in the funerary *lekkythoi*.²⁹ And so the girl's image emphasizes the same idea as the epitaph: instead of marriage, maidenhood forever. The young girl's image thus remains perpetually attached to her father. Ancient Greece looks on the death of a girl from the perspective of a marriage thwarted, and the Phrasikleia memorial constitutes an early example of this idea. Phrasikleia will always be a *kore*, an unwedded maiden, linked to her father, like Hestia, but also linked to the Kore-Persephone of myth, married in Hades, an image that explains her appearance as a bride.

Another aspect of the statue of Phrasikleia that has received much attention in recent times is the polychromy still perceptible on the *kore*. Sophisticated techniques have been employed to determine the colour of the statue, facilitating a reconstruction of the young woman's image that, although startling to our eyes, accustomed to white marble, is actually much closer to its original appearance, which was intended to guide the gaze and reinforce the interaction between sculpture and viewer.³⁰

As I said in the introduction to this chapter, a new, recently published epitaph from the island of Kos makes the image of 'bride of Hades' explicit, something that is only hinted at in the memorial to Phrasikleia:

πα  [α] προλιπ ὁ σα, ΟΜ., ΦΙΛ [- - - - -]
'Εμπεδοκράτη κείμ[α]ι, νύμφ' ὅλο ὁ Αἴδαο·

οἰκτρὰ παθ ὁ σα, φίλ[η] οἷσι π ὁ θά  [- - - - -]
μάτερ, ἅταν ἔλεω, κ[η]ν Αἴδαο δό[ματι - - -] ³¹

Abandoning my father...

I, Empedokrate, lie here, bride to terrible Hades:

I have suffered a cruel destiny, beloved...

*Oh, mother, I pity on my misfortune! In the house of Hades ...*³²

We find a girl who, in the first person, presents herself as a bride to terrible Hades. Only the second verse is preserved in full: 'I, Empedokrate, lie here, bride to terrible Hades'. The rest can only be read in part: in the first verse the girl mentions her father, who has survived her; in the third verse she refers to her cruel destiny as a young woman dead before her time; finally, in the last verse, she invokes her mother and laments her fate. The specific image of bride of Hades, a terrible abductor, is found only in this text to date. Nonetheless, it seems familiar to us from its use as a generic metaphor for the destiny of maidens who die prior to marriage, and due to the

association between funerary and matrimonial rites in well-known passages of Attic tragedy, in reference to figures such as Antigone or Cassandra.³³

Kroisos, *whom raging Ares destroyed*

In contrast to the image of the maiden Phrasikleia, we now turn to the funerary monument of Kroisos, fallen in battle. This funerary *kouros* is the only existing example where the accompanying epigram also survives;³⁴ in terms of evidence it is just as exceptional as the Phrasikleia. We have already noted its magnificent nature, an example of aristocratic taste in funerary decoration. From the same period as the Phrasikleia, c. 540 BC, the epitaph of young Kroisos is also composed of an elegiac distich,

στῆθι : καὶ οἴκτιρον : Κροῖσο | παρὰ σῆμα θανόντος :
ἢ ὄν | ποτ' ἐνὶ προμάχοις : ὄλεσε | θ ὁ ρος : Ἄρες.³⁵

*Stay and pity at the tomb of Kroisos, dead,
who one day on the front line of battle, raging Ares destroyed.*

The couplet is composed of a simple first verse calling the passer-by to pause and mourn, *stethi kai oiktiron* (στῆθι καὶ οἴκτιρον), and a second verse suited to the death of a warrior: the expression ‘on the front line of battle’ (ἐνὶ προμάχοις), found in two other epitaphs of the era,³⁶ and the verb *ollymi* (ὄλλυμι), preferred over the more generic *thanein* (θανεῖν) for expressing death in epigrams dedicated to combatants.³⁷ The use of the imperative, demanding the passer-by’s attention, invites and encourages interaction between the latter and Kroisos’ image. Such a demand might not seem strange to us; however, summoning the passer-by in this way is novel in the funerary epigraphy: ‘the picture presented by the surviving evidence shows the passer-by emerging quite suddenly in sixth-century Attica’.³⁸ In Attica in the second half of the 6th century BC, this type of inscription often suggests the passer-by should engage in one of the following actions: move past the marker, stop at the marker, look at the marker, lament. The memorial to Kroisos includes three of them.³⁹

As regards the verses of the epigram, these have epic overtones in their mention of Ares: *thouros Ares* (θοῦρος Ἄρης) is a Homeric expression,⁴⁰ also found in an elegy by Tyrtaeus, precisely in reference to a youth brought down by raging Ares (θοῦρος Ἄρης), fallen in the front lines (ἐν προμάχοισι πεσών) and whose name and fame do not fade away (οὐδέ ποτε κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀπόλλυται οὐδ’ ὄνομ’ αὐτοῦ).⁴¹ While it is true that ‘le jeune noble, plein de valeur, ne dispose plus de l’épopée pour le glorifier’,⁴² at least the same epic language can be employed. Nicole Loraux, also expressly citing this epitaph, affirms that Homeric poems and aristocratic epitaphs were inclined to have the gods intervening in battle, while at the height of the Classical period, the Athenian funeral oration would dispose of this supernatural component,

leaving all the glory to Athenian bravery.⁴³ Other studies, focusing specifically on this *kouros*, insist on these same ideas, and essentially point to the Homeric hero, reborn under Peisistratid patronage, as the sculptor's model for the Anavyssos *kouros*.⁴⁴ Along these lines, a comparison with the famous Aristion stele is also quite helpful: while the latter appears with his hoplite gear,⁴⁵ Kroisos reproduces the pure body, a body like that of the epic hero, the naked body of a warrior, admired and disputed over even after life was gone from it.⁴⁶



Figure 3.2 The Kroisos *kouros*, c. 540 bc, Attica. National Archaeological Museum of Athens: 3851 © Getty Images.

Again in this case, just as with the maiden Phrasikleia and with the two siblings represented in the New York Metropolitan stele (to be discussed later), a relationship with the Alcmaeonid family has been suggested: Kroisos had died in the battle of Pallene (546 bc) and the statue was erected

after 528/527 BC when the Alcmaeonids returned from exile.⁴⁷ However, the idea that such a time lapse occurred between the youth's death and the dedication of the statue rests on misleading grounds: the use of *πότε* ('once', 'some time ago') in the second verse. In reality, this use of *pote* in the epigram does not refer to a past time from the author's point of view; it is justified in relation to the epitaph's *future reader*. The author of the couplet does not write from his own time perspective, but thinks of those who will contemplate the memorial in the future. This epigram is not an exceptional case, and an 'inscriptional *πότε*' with great poetic intensity has even been spoken of in funerary dedications and epinicia, with examples such as this one in epitaphs from the time of the Pindar odes, and in Pindar's work itself: 'Future generations will come to learn the glorious deeds that athletes of old performed "once (upon a time)"'.⁴⁸

In this context of glorifying the youth fallen in battle, we only lack the expression *olesate heben* (ὀλέσατε ἥβην), 'you lost your youth', although the image of the *kouros* itself is enough to underscore the early death of Kroisos. This very common formula does appear in another epitaph slightly prior to Kroisos, which I also include in order to look more closely at the aristocratic origin of these mourned youths. The epigram reads as follows:

[εἴτε ἀστό]ς τις ἀνὲρ εἴτε χσένος | ἄλοθεν ἔλθὼν
 Τέτιχον οἰκτίρα |ς ἀνδρ' ἀγαθὸν παρίτο,
 ἐν πολέμοι | φθίμενον, νεαρὰν ἡ ἔβεν ὀλέσαν |τα.
 ταῦτ' ἀποδυράμενοι νῦν | σθε ἐπ' |ι πρᾶγμ' ἀγαθόν.⁴⁹

[Whether some townsman] or a stranger coming from elsewhere,
 pass way in pity of Tetichos, a noble man,
 fallen in battle, his tender youth ruined.
 Mourn these things, then return to noble affairs.⁵⁰

The subject of the epigram is the noble Tetichos. His name, found in Athens only in this inscription, might be a diminutive formed from *tettix* (τέττιξ), 'cicada', a possibility with many overtones: Thucydides tells how elderly, upper-class Athenians tied back their hair with brooches in the shape of golden cicadas, insects native to the land, just as the Athenians themselves.⁵¹ Also the use of *astos* (ἀστός, pl. ἀστοί) in the first verse stresses the noble youth's high social status. As early as Louis Gernet it was noted that the *astoi*, in this first half of the sixth century BC, are citizens of nobility;⁵² later a distinction would be established between *astos* (ἀστός) and *polites* (πολίτης), those who had civil rights and those who additionally had political rights.⁵³ So it is that the *astoi* are also mentioned in the following epitaph of a young man fallen in battle:

ἀστοῖ[ς] καὶ χσένοισι Φάνες φίλος [ἐνθάδε κεῖται], |
 [ἡ ὁ]ς πὸτ' ἀριστεῦον ἐν προμάχοις [ἔπεσε].⁵⁴

Loved by citizens and foreigners [here lies] Phanes,

As a hypothesis, I would suggest that the use of *astos* in these epitaphs is related to the noble origin of these fallen youths. Importantly, in the epitaphs of both Tetichos (Attica) and Phanes (Boeotia), there is more of a literary than a political value in the appeal to citizens and foreigners, in an era when the idea of citizenship was not clearly defined. Here the epigrammist is making use of the same resources as the poet Pindar when he wants to convince his audience of the value of his *laudandus*: *astos* (ἄστός) ... *xenos* (ξένος), as conventional formula, extends the force of the imperatives to every possible passer-by.⁵⁵

In the epitaphs of both Tetichos and Phanes, the term *xenos* appears paired with *astos*, and together, these create an all-inclusive appeal, irrespective of whether the passer-by is a citizen or a stranger. Later, however, in the Hellenistic period, *xenos* became the noun of choice to designate the passer-by in an epigram, a use that grew steadily more common after 480/79 BC. One possible explanation for this is in the success of two epigrams attributed to Simonides, one dedicated to the fallen at Salamis and another to the dead at Thermopylae. Both begin with the invocation ὦ ξένε, 'stranger', which, given the circumstances of the burial, is all-inclusive: the deceased were buried in a foreign land, and thus these two epigrams would address everyone as *xenos*. The first appears on a tomb for Corinthian soldiers who died and were buried in Salamis, and the second on a memorial to the Spartans who fell at Thermopylae. The custom of using *xenos* as inclusive may have originated here and subsequently spread due to the fame of these poems.⁵⁶

Returning to the epigram dedicated to Tetichos, the youth's nobility is emphasized in nearly every word of the epitaph. The values of 'Homeric society', if we adopt the words of Mario Vegetti, are fully represented here: the term *agathos* above all indicates status, and it is used in the place of 'noble'. This status must be continually reaffirmed by a certain behaviour, in the sense that *agathos* is the one who shows himself 'capable of', 'good for', and the *agathos* demonstrates these capacities in *arete*, especially in war.⁵⁷ The social recognition given in tribute to this *arete* is *kleos*, the fame that Tetichos, noble youth fallen in battle, has attained through this memorial.

The so-called stele of the Alcmaeonids

Let us also pause to consider the funerary monument which, prior to the discovery of Phrasikleia, was considered to be the most complete funerary monument of the Archaic age: a stele (c. 540–530 BC) with the figure of a male youth and a little girl. Although nothing can be deduced from the inscription concerning the relationship between the young man and the girl, this stele is commonly known as the 'Brother and Sister' stele. The epigram on its base is partially preserved:

υν ^Εμα φίλοι με [8–9 litt.] | πατέρ ἐπέθεκε θανόν ^Τ[ι], |
 ζ ^Δσὺν ^δἐ φίλε μέτερ vacat | [-vv-vv-]⁵⁸

*I am the memorial set up to beloved Me[gacles?] by his father,
 and the beloved mother*

Regrettably, the names of the youth and the girl have been lost. Once again, as we saw when speaking of Phrasikleia and Kroisos, a relationship with the Alcmaeonid family has been suggested, this time based on the possibility that one of the names begins with the syllable Me-, perhaps Megacles.⁵⁹ The only certainty is that a father had this ostentatious monument erected in memory of his children, and that once again it is quite exceptional. Upright tombstones, such as this one, began to appear around the time of the first Attic *kouroi*, and became popular among the aristocracy, especially for those who died young. They were usually decorated with a sphinx on top of the stele, and later on, with bas-reliefs that typically represented a single figure, corresponding to the elongated shape of the tombstone. In this case, the presence of two siblings makes it a unique finding.

The iconography of the stele is very interesting: the boy carries a little bottle of oil (an aryballos), bringing to mind his condition as an athlete, and a pomegranate or lotus flower in his hand, alluding to his prospects of new life; the girl holds a flower, perhaps a lotus, and raises it to her nose.⁶⁰ As we have seen with Phrasikleia, it is sometimes difficult to clearly distinguish all the decorative elements: what Phrasikleia carries in her hand is a lotus flower, but the necklace, according to some, is made of pomegranates, while others say they are lotus flowers. In the ‘Brother and Sister’ stele, it has been customary to interpret what the boy carries in his hand as a pomegranate, but it is not clear. As for the girl, one scholar has noted that the flower she carries, in this case clearly a lotus flower, reproduces the sacred motif of the ‘smelled flower’, original to Egyptian art and also adopted by the Phoenicians: the lotus that the girl is smelling might be considered a symbol of resurrection, of immortality.⁶¹ The stele we are considering not only offers an idealized image of what these young people were like in life, but it also projects toward the afterlife with symbols such as the pomegranate and the lotus. By contrast, looking only toward the past will practically become a rule in funerary iconography of the Classical age.



Figure 3.3 Marble stele of a youth and a little girl, c. 540–530 BC, Attica. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: 11.185 © Getty Images.

Another Archaic epitaph dedicated to a pair of siblings is shown below, in iambic verse, although in this case the stele is not preserved:

τόδ' Ἀρχίῳ ὅτι σῆμα : καὶ |δελφῆς φίλες, :
 Εὐκο ν |σμίδης : δὲ τοῦτέποι |εσεν καλόν, :
 στέλε |ν : δ' ἐπ' αὐτὸ ὁ ι : θῆκε Φ |αίδιμοσοφός.

*This is the tomb of Archios and his beloved sister,
 Eukosmides had it made beautiful,
 and Phaidimos the skilled placed the stele upon it.*⁶²

Judging from the surviving documentation, for a funerary monument to commemorate two siblings, as in this case, was not at all common in the sixth century BC. However, another example may be the memorial to Phrasikleia, found next to a *kouros* generally considered to be a funerary monument dedicated to her brother.

There are also other examples, albeit very few, of memorials in which two siblings appear together, but only because one of them is the dedicant. I would like to conclude this section by commenting on two inscriptions of this kind, which constitute a statistical exception, the epitaph dedicated to Parthenika and the epitaph to Gnathon. Even in the fourth century BC, when we shall see a greater variety of family relations expressed in funerary epigrams than in earlier centuries, it is quite unusual for the deceased, whether a man or a woman, to be commemorated as a brother or sister. Perhaps due to the scarcity of such examples, and also to the terse nature of these two epitaphs, the feeling they express impresses us deeply.⁶³

I shall start with the memorial to Parthenika:

Παρθενίκας τόδε μνᾶμα Φρασισθένης ἡ ἐρι θανοίσας
 Δαμόκλει' ἔστασε κασιγᾶν' ἔταν ποθέσαισα.⁶⁴

*This memorial of Parthenika, daughter of Phrasisthenes, who died young,
 was raised by Damokleia, longing for her sister.*

This epitaph belongs to the group of funerary monuments discovered in excavating the Kamari necropolis on the island of Thera, between 1986 and 1996. Who knows whether this memorial, considering the sister's name Damoklea, would not have again been linked to the family of the Alcmaeonids if it had been found in Attica instead of Thera. It is dedicated to a maiden who died young, to whom her sister has raised a memorial (μνᾶμα). We know the names of both: Parthenika the former, Damokleia the latter. From its dates it is practically contemporary to Phrasikleia, but on this occasion the emphasis is placed on the longing felt by the sister, *pothesaisa* (ποθέσαισα). One interesting point from the maiden of Thera epitaph has to do with the appearance of the term *Parthenikas* / *parthenikas* (Παρθενίκας / παρθενίκας). I will refer later to an epitaph from Sinope where this same name appears in a dedication to a young woman: some authors take it as an allusion to her girlhood (memorial of a maiden), while others consider it a proper name (memorial of Parthenika). The same question arises in this case, but the opinion of Matthaiou seems acceptable

enough, and is included as an appendix to the article cited: the author understands Parthenika to be a proper name in the Thera memorial, and the same to be true in the Sinope case, where the pyramid-shaped monument indicates on one side the parentage of the deceased, on another side her age, and on the third side her name.⁶⁵ One clear argument in favour of Parthenika as a proper name is that the epitaph would otherwise be lacking precisely the key (and sometimes only) element, the name of the deceased.

As regards the epigram dedicated to Gnathon, this one is from Attica and is the only example from this period where we find a sister in the role of dedicant. It is inscribed as a spiral on a marble disc of a clearly funerary nature, which would most probably have been employed as a lid on some type of grave vase:⁶⁶

Γνάθονος : τόδε στήμα, : θέτο δαύτὸν : | ἀδελφὴ : ἡ ἐλίθιον : νοσελεύσα : | σα.⁶⁷

This tomb of Gnathon, his sister placed here, after having cared for him in vain during his illness.

Other Archaic epitaphs of young nobles

When Sarpedon, son of Zeus, is about to die in Troy, Hera speaks at first threateningly, to the dismay of his Olympian father (there are other gods who have lost sons in war, let Zeus refrain from wanting to deliver his own son from death!), but she ends in conciliatory tones: ‘No, dear as he is to you, and your heart grieves for him, leave Sarpedon there to die in the brutal onslaught, beaten down at the hands of Menoetius’ son Patroclus. But once his soul and the life force have left him, send Death to carry him home, send soothing Sleep, all the way till they reach the broad land of Lycia. There his brothers and countrymen will bury the prince with full royal rites, with mounded tomb and pillar. These are the solemn honors owed the dead’ (γέρας θανόντων).⁶⁸

This tribute that will prompt remembrance, this honour due to the dead, *geras thanonton*, is not only the privilege of sons of the gods, as we have been observing. As an echo of Homer, once again, the same formula reappears in an epitaph from the mid-sixth century BC:

Ὀπικλέος παιδὸς Δαμα | σιστράτο ἐνθάδε στήμα |
Πεισιάναχς κατέθηκε· τὸ | γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανόντο[ς].⁶⁹

Of Damasistratos, son of Epikles,

Peisianax set up this tomb: for this is the honour due to the dead.

I have chosen this epitaph dedicated to Damasistratos, of whom we know nothing except the name of his father, in order to begin a review of some of the more well-conserved epigrams dedicated to aristocratic youth in the second half of sixth-century BC Attica (with the exception of the epigram to Chairedemos, from the mid-sixth century). Found in the church of Saint

Nicholas at Anavyssos bay (recall that the Kroisos *kouros* was also found at Anavyssos), it has been considered one more argument in favour of the presence of a branch of the Alcmaeonids in this area, the future Cleisthenic deme of Anaphlystus.⁷⁰

The epigrams that I shall now discuss were not dedicated, or at least not explicitly, to young men killed in battle; I have already mentioned these when commenting on the epitaph to Kroisos, and they have also been the subject of a recent and comprehensive study.⁷¹ It is important to note that whatever the cause of death, should this be mentioned in the epitaph, the overwhelming majority of conserved Archaic memorials and epitaphs from Attica are dedicated to young men, and occasionally young women, who died in their prime. The dedicant is usually the father, and less frequently, the mother. I shall continue my review with the following epigram, inscribed on the base of a statue or a stele, found in Attica:

Χαιρεδέμο τόδε σῆμα πατέρ ἔσπε[σε | θ]ανόντος
Ἀνφίχαρες ἀγαθὸν παῖδα ὃ λοφυρόμενο[ς].
Φαίδιμος ἐποίη.⁷²

*This tomb of Chairedemos, dead, was raised by his father
Anphichares, mourning a noble son.
Phaidimos made it.*

As a prose addition to the text, we recognize the artist's name, Phaidimos, which appears in two other inscriptions: one of these, quite fragmented, can be read on the base of a lost *kore*,⁷³ the other on the lower part of the Archios and his sister stele, discussed above.⁷⁴ The intervention of such a renowned artist indicates the noble origin of the person commemorated. Around the mid-seventh century BC, when the demand for stone temples and images to replace older works in wood first appeared, it is likely that the artisans who made the statues were the same ones who built the temples. Thus it was said of mythical Daedalus: ἀρχιτέκτων ἄριστος καὶ πρῶτος ἀγαλμάτων εὐρετής, 'excellent architect and the first sculptor'.⁷⁵ Signing of statues probably did not begin until there was an established artistic specialization in sculpture.⁷⁶ In Attica, Phaidimos is the first such artist for whom we find signed pieces. Not lacking in self-esteem, as Boardman notes,⁷⁷ we have seen him inscribe his name above as Φαίδιμοσοφός, Phaidimos the Clever. There is another curiosity regarding these artist signatures, namely, that they are not autographs in a strict sense: the sculptors themselves did not engrave their name in the stone, but it was done by a professional stoneworker, usually the same one who inscribed the funerary or votive text. For example, it has been determined that this Phaidimos, Aristion (author of the Phrasikleia *kore*) and Aristocles (whom we will encounter further on as the author of a non-preserved memorial), probably all worked in the same workshop, since their signatures were executed by the same hand.⁷⁸

The following couplet is somewhat later, inscribed on the marble base of a

stele. We read the name of a father, Cylon, who has placed the memorial in remembrance of his two dead sons. The inscription represents the only use of *philemosyne* (φιλεμοσύνης) in the funerary epitaphs published by Hansen:⁷⁹

σῆμα τόδε : Κύλον : παῖδοι<ν> | ἐπέθεκε{ν} : θανό<ν>τοι-:
μ<ν>ῆμα | φιλεμοσύνης : ...⁸⁰

*This tomb was raised by Cylon for his two dead sons,
a memorial of affection...*

The following is also found on the base of a stele. The inscription provides very little information and the stele has been lost, but it is very probably the epitaph for a young man since the dedicant is the mother:

Αἰσιμῆς [ἰδο τό]δε [σῆμα] | μα φίλε μέτερ κα[τέ] | ἦκεν.⁸¹

This tomb of Aesimides was erected by his beloved mother

The next distich is found on the base of a marble statue of a youth, and as in all these examples, the statue is not preserved – quite regrettable in this case, since it would have been a work by Aristion of Paros:

(i) σῆμα πατέρ Κλέ[[β]] | βολος⁸² ἀποφθιμέ | νοι Χσενοφάντοι |
θῆκε τόδ' ἀντ' ἀρετῆς | ἐδὲ σαοφροσύνης.
(ii) [Ἀριστίον Π]άριος | [μῆπόεσε].⁸³

*The father Clebolas erected this tomb for his dead son Xenophantos,
for his excellence and good judgement.
[Aristion] of Paros [made me].*

Another father's lament for his son can be read in the following verses, from a piece found in 1832 in the Themistoclean Wall, and lost today:

σῆμα φί[λ]ο παιδὸς τόδε ἰδῆν Δι[όδωρος] | ἔθηκεν
Στεσίω, ἡ ὄν θάνατο[ς] δακρυ[ύ] | ὅες καθ[έ]χεται.⁸⁴

*This tomb of his beloved son, to be seen, was raised by [Diodoros],
of Stesias possessed by death that causes weeping.*

From late in the century, the following inscription was on the base of a marble statue of a rider, not preserved:

[σῆμα] τόδε, Χσενόφαντε, | πατέρ σο<ι> θῆκε θανόντι |
Σώφιλος ἡ δ' ἰ πένθος | θῆκε κας ἀποφθίμενος. |
Ἀριστοκλῆς ἐποίησεν.⁸⁵

*This tomb, Xenophantos, was raised for you, dead, by your father
Sophilos; by dying you have left him in mourning.*

The next epitaph corresponds to these same dates, on the base of another lost marble stele:

οἰκτίρο⁸⁶ προσορὸν [ν] | παιδὸς τόδε σ⁸⁷μα | θανόντος
Σμικυθ[ο] | ἡ ὅς τε φίλον ὄλεσε | ν' ἔλπ'(sic) ἀγαθέν.⁸⁷

*I grieve, when I see this tomb of the dead boy,
of Smikythos, who destroyed the good hope of his loved ones.*

Finally, we can cite the memorial of noble Kleoites:

παιδὸς ἄπο φθιμένοιο Κλεοί⁸⁸το τὸ Μεν | εσαίχμο
μν⁸⁹μ' ἔσορὸν οἴκτιρ' ὅς καλὸς | ὄν ἔθανε.⁸⁸

*Mourn as you look on this memorial
of dead Kleoites, son of Menesaichmos: though noble, he died.*

In this last couplet I have preferred the translation 'noble', instead of 'beautiful',⁸⁹ in line with the parallelism that Gentili establishes between the second verse of this epigram and Theognis 666:

[...] καὶ τιμῆς καὶ κακὸς ὦν ἔλαχεν

*and though evil, he attains honour*⁹⁰

In each case these epitaphs are found on the base of stelai or lost statues, some of them including the artist's signature (Phaidimos, Aristion, Aristocles).⁹¹ They are metrical inscriptions, striving for beauty, just as the monuments themselves. Memorials to be seen, to keep alive the names of the dead. It is no wonder that, just as poets like Pindar made a point of praising their own art along with the *laudandus* of the moment, sculptors showed pride in their work and made that explicit;⁹² for example on the base of one *kore*, a piece by Phaidimos, the second verse of the couplet states: καλὸν ἰδεῖν αὐτὰρ Φαίδιμος ἐργάσατο, 'Phaidimos made it beautiful, in order to be seen'.

The two examples which I have examined more closely, Phrasikleia and Kroisos, are exceptional examples of epitaphs from the Archaic age, sixth century BC, being well preserved and accompanied by their respective funerary statues.⁹³ Both are epic in their language and heroic in their representation, although subject to metrical restrictions, to conventional formulas and to the limits of a single distich; in both cases great poetical value was attained. It is tempting to think of them as prototypical, the maiden with her allusion to death before marriage, and the youth fallen in the front lines of battle, but a study of later epitaphs from the Classical age (fifth century BC, and especially the more plentiful examples from the fourth

century BC), will offer us interesting reference points in considering youths of both sexes: the images of death before marriage and a wedding in Hades are not limited to the iconography of maiden memorials, nor is the use of the verb *olesthai* (ὄλεσθαι), compared to the more common *thanein* (θανεῖν), so closely tied to the deaths of males fallen in battle that it is disallowed in remembering the death of maidens.

How to Deprive the Year of Its Spring

To deprive the city of its youth would be to deprive the year of its spring. According to some sources, this is the comparison that Pericles makes in his famous speech for the fallen, in the first year of the Peloponnesian War.¹

Weeping for the young, regardless of their sex or cause of death, mourning for the city's *loss of its spring*, is certainly present in Greek epitaphs. In the funerary monuments that we examine in this chapter, indications of death before its time, *mors inmatura*, can be found in the epitaph itself, in direct or veiled fashion, or inferred from some iconographic element in the stele, usually a loutrophoros.² This type of lustral vase appears in the funerary monument to indicate that the deceased was never married, in other words, he or she was overtaken by death in early youth.³ Maiden Phrasikleia is perhaps the clearest and best-known image of a memorial dedicated to a young woman who died before being wed; however, as indicated earlier, the stereotype of a *pro gamou* death was not established until the Hellenistic age. In the funerary epigraphy of the fifth century BC, reference to such a death before marriage is practically absent and only in the fourth century BC do we find it again, for both maidens and young boys.⁴

In this chapter, focused on funerary monuments from the Classical period, especially the fourth century BC, and dedicated to young people, the Pausimache memorial deserves special attention, and is our starting point. Moreover, the stele where the epitaph is found leads me to an interpretive hypothesis on the iconographic value of the mirror on Attic stelai, a topic of some controversy.

I shall also examine a striking absence in Attica prior to the fourth century BC, that of the expression 'you/they lost your/their youth' (ᾠλεσαν / ᾠλέσατ(ε) ἥβην) in epitaphs for young women. I will suggest that the non-use of this expression in Attic epitaphs for young women over the course of this century is related to the association between *hebe* (ἥβη) and *andria* (ἀνδρεία), youth and virility, and the frequent presence of both terms in epitaphs for young men who died in combat, whether private or public (recall the rules the city imposed in the fifth century BC regarding praise of the war dead).

The final section is devoted to a general examination of the subject of *mors inmatura*. As we saw in the Archaic epitaphs analysed in the previous chapter, young women and men who died before their time were mourned by their mothers, fathers and the entire city. We shall now see how the text of the epitaph or the image on the stele, with the depiction of a

loutrophoros, often provides the information necessary to determine whether the death occurred prematurely. In general, these epigrams are more extensive than the Archaic ones, are inscribed on the stelai rather than on the base blocks of *korai* and *kouroi*, and employ very emotive images to express grief.

Pausimache through the mirror

The funerary monument that I will address in this section is well known and well preserved; from an iconographic point of view, it is the only Attic stele from the Classical period whose image includes a mirror and whose epigram is also available. This is the memorial to Pausimache, where the epitaph makes no explicit reference to a frustrated marriage, nor is a loutrophoros represented in the stele. We are able to infer that we are dealing with a maiden who died before marriage from the fact that there are references to the mother's and father's grief (a husband is not mentioned) and, perhaps, from the relief that shows a young woman looking at herself in a mirror, an element that can be attributed to unmarried maidens. This is the inscription on the bottom of the stele:

πᾶσι θανεῖν <ἐ>ΐμαρτα<ι> ὅσοι ζῶσιν, σὺ δὲ πένθος
οἱ | κτρὸν <ἔ>χ<ειν> ἔλιπες, Πausιμάχη, προγόνους
μητρ<ί> | τ<ε> Φαινίπ<π>ηι καὶ πατρὶ Πausανίαι,
σῆς<ς> δ' ἄρετῆς μ<ν>η | μ<ε>ῖον ὄραν τόδ<ε> τοῖς παρὶ ὁ σιν
σωφροσύνης<ς> τ<ε>ς

*It has been fated that all who live must die, but you,
Pausimache, have left your parents an intense pain,
to your mother Phaenippe and your father Pausanias.
Of your excellence and good judgment, this is the monument
so that all who pass by may see it.*⁶

In his classic study on stelai and epigrams, Clairmont recalls the Kerameikos images that recreate wedding preparations, and he attributes the same symbolic value both to the mirror and to loutrophoroi: an allusion to marriage. However, the depiction of a mirror on funerary stelai has been interpreted in different ways. As the general thesis of his study, Clairmont himself argues that there is no special link between the epigram and the stele, but that the two reinforce each other. He suggests that this very high-quality relief would have been available in a sculptor's workshop, and the parents considered it suitable for Pausimache's memorial.⁷

Over the last two decades, numerous studies have examined how inscriptions and images on funerary memorials complement each other, especially at the level of reception or viewer/reader response.⁸ Traditionally, however, the tendency has been to study the images and texts separately, the stelai on one hand and their inscribed epigrams on the other,

mentioning at the most a very generic, stereotype-ridden relationship between the two. Even so, there have also been those who find disparities between these two components of the funerary monument. In this particular case, it has been noted that, while the epitaph underscores the *arete* and *sophrosyne* of Pausimache, the stele has nothing to do with these ideals, focusing instead on the mirror, on adornment, on the woman as a basis of economic power among the Athenian elite.⁹ But there are several clarifications to be made regarding this comment: first, recall once more that *arete* and *sophrosyne* are also the adornment of men; and in this case we have not only a woman, but more specifically a maiden, and this is the context in which I believe we are to understand the mirror. Besides, it is not clear that there is any contradiction between the desired traits of *arete* and *sophrosyne*, and the iconographic motif of the mirror, as the adornment/virtue conflict is more Christian than Greek.

A series of interesting studies is dedicated to the specific motif of the mirror in Greek funerary art¹⁰ and in a broader sense to the language of gestures in these monuments.¹¹ Bectarte's study is especially helpful since it presents a catalogue of funerary images that have a mirror, including images that do not appear in the reference catalogue by Clairmont, who limits his evidence to Attica and to the Classical age.¹² According to Bectarte, the appearance of a mirror in funerary stelai must have some meaning beyond a mere reference to personal *toilette* – an assertion that we can accept regardless of whether we agree with the value Bectarte ultimately attributes to it. Where I do not concur is with the author's initial reasoning, formulated as follows: there must be consistency between what the epitaph says and what the image says, and the epitaphs never consider attention to one's personal *toilette* to be a subject of praise, *ergo* ... However, this formulation should be qualified: the fact that the *toilette* is not expressly praised does not mean that it is rejected, not to mention the polysemic nature of these images, and the variation in meanings that are added or lost over time. The mirror, with no negative connotation whatsoever, is the quintessential attribute of the woman in Greek art, and defines a female space in any context.¹³

Therefore, based on what I consider to be an excessively restrictive interpretation regarding the meaning of this important iconographic element, Bectarte rejects any connection to the *toilette*¹⁴ or to adornment, shall we say, to any frivolous context (since this is what seems to be assumed),¹⁵ and her conclusion is that the mirror symbolizes the change that a person experiences when overtaken by death. Such symbolism, she assures us, falls in line with the content of the epitaphs, the baseline premise for her entire analysis: the mirror in funerary reliefs is a symbol of the *psyche* abandoning the body, which it outlives indefinitely, 'as the epitaphs say'.¹⁶

Nonetheless, it seems somewhat risky to make general assertions about

the concept and representation of the flight of souls in epitaphs and stelai from such a wide time spectrum as that covered by this study's catalogue (from the fifth to the first centuries BC, as noted above). Whether or not this interpretation of the mirror as an iconographic motif is valid for the post-Classical era, can we affirm that epitaphs from the fifth and fourth centuries BC say anything about the *psyche*? I will try to answer this immediately, but first I remind the reader that the idea of the soul being separated at the moment of death is already found, of course, in Homer (cf. *Il.* 16. 856), and that vase painters occasionally represent this parting with a small bird, the *eidolon* of the deceased, which could even display a human face.¹⁷ Hence, it is not a matter of denying belief in the *flight* of souls, but to test whether this was a subject of Classical epitaphs and stelai in Attica, art that has always been identified as retrospective and not forward looking.

So then, what do Greek funerary epigrams say about this separation, about this moment when the *psyche* abandons the body?

1.

The first epitaph that may document an allusion to the *psyche/soma* duality, and their different paths after death, is from 432 BC, a public monument for those fallen in the battle of Potidaea in that year: αἰθήρ μὲν φουχᾶς ὑπεδέχσατο, σόμ[α]τα δὲ χθὼν] τ[ὸ] ὕδ[ρ]ο.¹⁸ Of the Athenians fallen in Potidaea, *the air received their souls, the earth their bodies*.

2.

Following this, the remaining evidence is already from the mid-fourth century BC: Εὐρυμάχου ψυχὴν | καὶ ὑπερφιάλος διαν[ο]ίας / αἰθήρ ὑγρὸς ἔχ[ει], σῶμα δὲ τύνβος ὄδε.¹⁹ *The soul of Eurymachus and his powerful thoughts / are held by the moist air; his body, by this grave; ὅστέα μὲν καὶ σάρκας | ἔ[χ]ει χθὼν παῖδα τὸν ἡ[γε]δύν, / ψυχὴ δὲ εὐσεβέων | οἴχεται εἰς θάλαμιον,*²⁰ *The ground holds the bones and flesh, the sweet child, / and his soul has parted to the chamber of the pious; [ἥ] μὲν σῶμ' ἐν[τ]ί | γ[ὰρ] κ[αὶ] εἴται, ψυχὴ δ' ἐν Ὀλύμπ[ῳ],*²¹ the reconstruction of this woman's epitaph is not clear, but in regard to the expression that concerns us, it would be something like this: *her body lies in the earth, her soul in Olympus*.

3.

Finally, ψυχὴ μὲν προλιποῦσα τὸ σόν, [Δημήτριε, σῶμα] οἴχεται εἰς Ἔρεβος.²² Once again the epigram is only partially preserved, and if we accept the reconstruction of the first two verses, it would read as follows: *After your soul abandoned your body, Demetrius, it departs for the Erebus*.

The evidence is thus extremely limited and depends to a large measure on reconstructions; moreover, it leads into the difficult debate around the ancient Greeks' concept of *soul* and *immortal soul*, a topic I will return to in the final chapter.

The expressions are varied: the soul can pass to the domain of the air, it can go to the Erebus, even to Olympus. But in summary, I was unable to find more than just a few examples with any allusion to that moment in which the soul abandons the body.²³ And this would confirm the commonly recognized trait we have just mentioned, that stele art is more retrospective than forward-looking. While it is possible to find elements in Archaic memorials that allude to an afterlife (such as the lotus of Phrasikleia), the

iconography of Attic stelai refers to earthly life, and this is where the mirror as a feminine attribute fits perfectly, just as the strigil clearly indicates a masculine context.

Furthermore, when these stelai do show any forward-looking concern, they are more inclined to allude to immortal fame, to *kleos*, and not to a new life of the soul:

[σ]ῶμα μὲν ἐν κόλποισι κατὰ χθών ἦδε καλ[ύπτει] |
 [Τι]μ[ό]κλει[ας], τὴν σὴν δὲ ἀρετὴν οὐθεὶς [φθ]ίσι[μ]ι [ἰών]· |
 [ἀθά]νατος μνήμη σωφρ[ο]σύνης ἐνε[κ]α.²⁴

*This earth encloses in its bowels the body
 of Timocleia, but no eternity can consume your excellence:
 immortal remembrance because of your good judgement.*

Here there is no mention of the soul, but of *immortal remembrance*, in contrast to the body. It would seem that there is a well-established idea, from antiquity, of the body–*kleos* dichotomy. In short, if the mirror says anything about the separation of the soul and the body, something that I would rule out, it is not in support of what the epitaphs say, as they seem to show little interest in the matter. In fact, the *psyche* does not seem to have received any special attention in Greek thought of the Archaic age. Mario Vegetti remarked that the soul as a central figure in religious and moral thought was a novelty, introduced into Greece around the sixth century BC by Dionysiac, Orphic and Pythagorean movements, remaining outside of mainstream thought for a long time;²⁵ for example, at the end of this chapter we will discuss the stele of young Dionysius (c. 346/338 BC), which speaks of the immortal soul.²⁶ At any rate, in classical Greece, the iconographic representation of that liminal moment of separation of body and soul is to be found not in the stelai, but in another type of corpus such as ceramics, especially the lekythoi.

The mirror in Attic stelai

I will attempt to draw a conclusion as to the meaning of the mirror, based on a number of examples limited in space and time to the Attic stelai of the Classical period. I feel this restriction is appropriate, and brings coherence to this study, since most of the evidence from the fifth and fourth centuries BC is found in Attica;²⁷ of the eleven stelai with a mirror from the fifth century BC, six are from Attica, as are all eleven catalogued examples from the fourth century BC. Although this motif persists and becomes even more common in later centuries, especially in the second century BC, it disappears from Attic art in the post-classical age.²⁸

Apart from a few exceptions that I will address later, no study seems to observe that the different stelai that show a woman with a mirror can easily be grouped into two iconographic types;²⁹ (1) a maiden holds a mirror in her

hand – presented in three quarters – and she is looking at herself in it;³⁰ or (2) a woman holds a mirror – which faces us straight on – between herself and one or more other figures.³¹

Before continuing, let us address certain stelai from the fourth century BC which do not seem, at first glance, to completely fit in the categories I have proposed. To begin, there is the stele of a girl who holds a mirror in her hand and presents it straight on; in this case the dating is uncertain, and I concur with Clairmont's idea that it is a Roman creation.³² In addition, we have a stele where the companion is the one who holds a mirror and a little box in her hands;³³ another where we see a young woman holding a mirror in her lap;³⁴ and finally, an image of a young woman arranging her hair while looking at herself in a mirror, and she in turn is being observed by an elderly man; this scene is portrayed on a *loutrophoros*, which in turn is depicted on the stele.³⁵ Regarding this last example, we can mention a scene that must have been quite similar, represented on a fragment of a funerary stele in the Calvet Museum of Avignon,³⁶ where a maiden is arranging her hair with her right hand, while in her left hand she holds a mirror that is not preserved. This stele is not taken into account in the Bectarte repertory, but it is important in relation to the cited *loutrophoros* image, and would confirm that it is customary for the images to form a series, and that gestures belong to very specific repertories.

These variants can be included without hesitation in the two types that I have indicated above:³⁷

1.

Maiden looking at herself in the mirror. She can be alone³⁸ or accompanied by another female figure who usually offers her a box, and who, apparently, has given a mirror to her³⁹ or is about to do so.⁴⁰ In the latter case, logically the maiden is not yet looking at herself in it. There is another variation, where the maiden has already received the mirror, but it is in her lap, and she gazes into the distance.⁴¹ A similar case is the scene of a young woman looking at herself in the mirror and arranging her hair with her other hand.⁴²

2.

Woman showing a mirror. These are scenes with two or more characters: the woman, seated, raises a mirror; she is not looking at herself in it, but presents it straight on. The mirror occupies the centre of the scene.⁴³

This division between two general types of stelai with a mirror seems to be relevant, and I believe we may suggest a hypothesis that explains the difference between looking at oneself in the mirror and showing the mirror. The gestures in funerary scenes, as in the other spheres of iconography, are usually clearly codified. Like the objects represented in these scenes, they comprise a rather limited inventory. In Attic stelai there are certain elements, frankly few in number, that are unmistakable indications of age, sex and status: children's toys, the young athlete's strigil, the woman's spinning wheel, the citizen's walking stick, etc. Where does the mirror fit in? It naturally refers to the female gender, but depending on how it is

presented, it might also indicate whether the represented female is a maiden or a married woman. In other words, it has a two-fold value: indicating gender (on its own) and age/status (according to its position). This interpretation would also fit with the idea that other authors have mentioned, that age classification of Greek women is closely linked to rites of passage and to sexuality.⁴⁴

The clear distinction between these two types seems too striking to be overlooked; but of course, this idea need not be incompatible with other meanings that have been attributed to the use of the mirror in this context. Again, I would emphasize that my considerations of the iconographic value of the mirror are limited to Attic funerary stelai from the fifth and fourth centuries BC, and it is advantageous to clearly mark out a corpus of study. Something so fundamental as the mirror appearing only in the hands of females and in stelai dedicated to women does not hold true for funerary representations from Apulia, also a well-studied corpus, where the mirror is widely present and with no gender distinction.⁴⁵ For these Apulian vessels, one of the meanings suggested is that of an appeal to the deceased: in some representations, a figure other than the deceased has a mirror in hand and places it in front of the image of the deceased, as if inquiring, wanting to communicate with him or her, an unknown scenario in the Attic repertory. This sense of revealing ('rite magique de révélation')⁴⁶ has also been attributed to scenes in Attic stelai where the mirror is being offered. In this case, however, it is the deceased woman (in the Attic context, always female) who is holding it; in other words, this meaning would be assigned to the stelai that I defined as the second type. But again, it is worth mentioning that very little concern about the hereafter is seen in the iconography of Classical Attic stelai or in the epitaphs, when preserved.

When the woman holds a mirror that is presented straight on to the viewer, apparently not looking into it at all, might this be an indication that from now on she can no longer be seen directly? We receive a different impression from the scenes where a maiden is looking into a mirror, such as the Pausimache stele that we started with. Here the young girl is focused on herself – is this possibly a metaphor of her closed body, like the lotus in the hands of the *kore* Phrasikleia? Moreover, in almost all the stelai where a young woman gazes into a mirror, she is represented alone, holding in her hands that element so clearly marked as part of a wedding trousseau, a frozen image that again reminds us, as in Phrasikleia, of a bride carried off by Hades just before the wedding nuptials. By contrast, in the scenes of a woman who presents a mirror straight on (a mirror that she even seems to be giving back, as symbolizing the end of a marriage), there are always family groups, some of them with children and others with a man who is in all likelihood the husband of the deceased, whose status as a married woman (ΓΥNH) is revealed in one case in the inscription itself.

In short, the mirror is a polysemic iconographic element, but its possible

meanings are defined in part by the context in which it appears. It does not mean the same thing in each era, in all locations or on every type of physical support. Even within the funerary context, we can distinguish between the stelai representations that are the focus of this study, and use of the mirror as part of grave-goods; curiously, in the latter case, the mirror is not found in the hand of the deceased (as is the strigil when buried with males), but it is placed over the pelvis or uterus.⁴⁷

In a well-defined corpus such as Attic stelai from the Classical period, gestures are highly codified and iconographic elements usually have a precise, easily identifiable value, even though a few gestures such as *dexiosis* have been interpreted in different ways. In this context, the double value that I have assigned to the mirror is quite pertinent: in an exclusively female context, it may indicate the status of maiden or of married woman, depending on the way it is represented. The generally accepted idea of Attic funerary stelai art as *retrospective* commemoration, not looking toward the future with allusions to a promise of life after death, but articulating social ideals and representing a certain ideology, would also fit with the meaning that I have proposed for the mirror.⁴⁸ Any possible association with transit of the soul would be secondary.

How to mourn for a maiden

Returning to the long-held assumption that the stele and epitaph of Pausimache refer to the death of an unwedded maiden, I hope to have added a convincing argument that the mirror in her hand reinforces that idea. And to this I would add another piece of evidence. While Pausimache, among the Attica stelai, is the only woman-with-mirror image where epitaph and image can be studied together, there is another funerary monument with a mirror (though the image is far from clear). This memorial comes from Sinope and refers even more explicitly to a maiden who died *in the flower of youth*:

(A)

τόδε | σῆμα | θυγα | τρὸς | Νάδυος | τῷ Καρός ἡμι.

(B)

παρι | ὦν στῇ | θί τε καὶ | ποίικτιρον· |
στήλη καὶ τό | δε σῆμα θυ | γατρός,
ἡ προ | λιπ ὁ σ' ἥβης ἄν | θος
πατρόθε | ν ὤλετο μονο | γενής.

(C)

παριῶν | [σ]τῇθί τε κ | ἀποίικτιρο | ν·
στήλη κ | αὶ τόδε σῆμα | α Παρθενικῇ | ς,
ἡ προλιπ ὁ σ' ἥβ | ης ἄνθος
πατρόθ | εν ὤλετο μονογεν | ής.⁴⁹

I am the tomb of the daughter of Nadys, the Carian.

Passer-by, stop and mourn:

This is the stele and tomb of a daughter

who, having left behind the flower of youth,
died, her father's only offspring.
Passer-by, stop and mourn:
This is the stele and tomb of Parthenica⁵⁰
who, having left behind the flower of youth,
died, her father's only offspring.

This memorial is a small marble pyramid; on side A it has a relief with two figures, a seated woman, and a girl standing across from her. We can accept Clairmont's assumption that the girl, probably holding a mirror in her hands, is the dead maiden, and the seated figure is her mother. The inscription is distributed among the three sides of the pyramid.

The epigram is special for many reasons, including its particular meter,⁵¹ and, of more interest to this study, its lexicon; for example, the term *monogenes* (μονογενής), 'only daughter', makes its single appearance here, among all the Archaic and Classical epigrams. Also interesting is the expression *hebes anthos* (ἥβης ἄνθος), 'flower of youth', which we find in reference to a young woman only here, and in one other epitaph from the fifth century BC, from Thessaly:

νεπία ἔῤσ' ἔθανον καὶ οὐ λάβον ἄνθος ἔτ' ἔβας, |
ἀλλ' ἰκόμαν πρόσθεν πολυδάκρυον εἰς Ἀχέροντα· |
μνᾶμα δὲ τεῖδε πατὲρ Ὑπεράνορος παῖς Κλεόδαμος |
στᾶσέ με Θεσσαλίας καὶ μάτερ θυγατρὶ Κορόνα.⁵²

*I died as a child and did not reach the flower of youth,
but came earlier to tearful Acheron.
As a memorial, her father Kleodamos son of Hyperanor raised me here,
for his daughter Thessalia, along with her mother, Korona.*

In Athens, no funerary monument from this period laments a female's youthfulness, or *hebe* (ἥβη). The expression 'ruined youth' (ἥβην ὄλεσθαι), was customary on public monuments⁵³ or monuments for the war dead, such as the famous epitaph for Tetichos that I have already discussed. Also exceptional in the Sinope stele is the verb *oleto* (ὤλετο) applied to a woman, in contrast to the more usual *thanein* (θανεῖν).⁵⁴ It reappears with a small variation [ὤλεσας ἡλικίαν] in a stele from Histria, from the fourth century BC, also for a maiden dead before marriage:

- (i) Ἡδίστη | Εὐαγόρο | θυγάτηρ.
(ii) τίς θν[ητῶν ?κραδίας οὕτως ἐκύ] | ρησεν ἀνοίξ[]
ὅστις [] | οὐκ ἐπὶ σοί, παρθένε, δάκρυ [χείοι], |
ἢ κάλλει κόσμωι τε μολοῦσα εἰς ἐλ[] | πίδα δόξης
Ἡδίστη πρὸ γάμω[v] | ὤλεσας ἡλικίαν.⁵⁵

*Hediste daughter of Evagoras. What mortal has such a pitiless heart
that he would not shed tears for you, maiden,
you who could have hoped for fame for your beauty and propriety,
Hediste, and have lost your youth before marriage?*

These mourned maidens all share a common difference from Pausimache: none of them is Athenian. These funerary monuments come from Sinope, Thessaly and Histria. As a work of art, the Attic stele of Pausimache is incomparable, but the verbal expression of sorrow seems to be more restrained. A bit later in the fourth century BC, the Attic stelai would also mourn the youth of dead women, whether maidens or not:

[εἰ θέμις ἦν] ^Θ νητὴν ἐναρίθμιο[ν ~ ~ ο]ύσαν
 ἀθανάταις | νο[μίσαι, σοὶ] τὸ γέρας τόδ' ἄν | ἦν,
 'Ηράκλ[ει]α· σὺ γὰρ προλι | ποῦς' ἦβ[η]ν [π]ολυανθῇ
 ὦιχ | οὐ ἀποφθιμ[έ] ^Ψ η μητρὸς π | ρολιποῦσα μέ[λ]αθρον
 Σίμ | οὐ ἀνοικτίστω[ς] Φερσεφό | νης θαλάμου<ς>.56

*If it were permitted that a mortal be counted [...]
 among the immortals, this would be your lot,
 Herakleia; because you, abandoning the blossom of youth,
 dead, abandoning the abode of your mother
 Simon, you left without pity to the chamber of Persephone.*

Given that this epigram mentions the mother, we understand that it speaks of an unmarried maiden; in the following epigram, it is the husband who mourns the lost youth of his wife:

οὐχὶ πέπλους, οὐ χρυσὸν ἐθαύμασεν ἐμ βίῳι ἦδε,
 ἀλλὰ πόσιν τε αὐτῆς σωφροσύ[νην τ(ε)] ~ ~]. |
 ἀντί δὲ σῆς ἥβης, Διονυσία, ἡ<λ>ικίας τε
 τόνδε τάφον κοσμεῖ σὸς πόσις Ἀντίφ[ιλος].57

*In life she admired neither peploi nor gold,
 but her husband and her own good judgement [...]
 Instead of attending to your youth, Dionysia, and to your vitality,
 Your husband Antiphilos attends to the adornment of this grave.*

We may wonder whether, in the Athenian fifth century, *hebe* (ἥβη) and *andreia* (ἀνδρεία), youth and virility, were inseparable, that is, as an object of praise. Perhaps it is no coincidence that in the fourth century BC, but not earlier, the ἥβη of women is mentioned in Athens. Nicole Loraux, in her study of the specific formula for lament over youth ruined [(ἀγλαὸν) ὤλεσαν / ὤλέσσε(ε) ἥβην], indicates that starting with the sixth century BC, this term was reserved for eulogizing the warrior fallen in battle,⁵⁸ but the city takes it up again in the fifth century BC for eulogizing its dead.⁵⁹ According to Loraux, this continuity suggests a certain persistence in representing the dead warrior as a youth, in addition to confirming that 'ἥβη est d'abord une *qualité*'.⁶⁰ Two shifts are perceived in this reuse of an aristocratic formula: democratization of praise and the continuation of certain profoundly aristocratic values.⁶¹

If, as Loraux says, *hebe* represents both the strength and fertility of the city, inasmuch as it is rooted in the nurturing soil of the homeland, of which

it is 'la plus noble floraison',⁶² can this term then be used in this sense when mourning a maiden dead before marriage, or a young wife? It would seem so, but in Attica, only as of the fourth century BC.⁶³

Untimely death

At this time I wish to review the rest of the epigrams from the Classical period that mourn the death of maidens or boys, selecting as always those that are most significant and well preserved. It would be inexcusable to begin without mentioning the well-known work by Anne-Marie Vérilhac – mentioned in my introduction – that is dedicated to the epitaphs of boys who died before achieving *ephebe* status.⁶⁴ Because of the focus of this study, which does not include girls, and because of the period covered, from the fifth century BC to the sixth century AD, including the literary epigrams of the *Palatine Anthology*, very few of the texts discussed by Vérilhac interest us directly. However, I do wish to make note of our agreement on selection criteria. Just as I have been doing until now, she makes use of a number of indicators that, in isolation or in combination, ensure that a given text constitutes an epitaph dedicated to a boy who died before achieving *ephebe* status, namely: explicit mention of this or a reference to some other fact that precedes *ephebeia*, an express indication of age, use of terms that unmistakably denote children (*nepios*, νήπιος, or *pais*, παῖς), representation of a child in the funerary relief. The motif of death before marriage, our priority in this chapter, appears only seven times in the corpus established by Vérilhac, always in the Roman period. As the author indicates, there is a rival motif in the epitaphs of boys: death 'before the first beard'.⁶⁵

As we approach the study of this type of epitaph, I would first like to quote the following distich, engraved on a marble stone, where we find one of the first appearances of the term *aoros* (ἄωρος), 'untimely':⁶⁶

ἔσλός ἐὼν Πολύιδος Ἐχέκρατίδew φίλος υἱὸς |
οἶκον ἀμαυρώσας ὤλετ' ἄωρος ἐὼν.⁶⁶

*The dear son of Echekratides, noble Poluidos, died before his time,
leaving his home in darkness.*

This epitaph can be contrasted to another found on a marble ogival stele, whose distich offers us the first significant example⁶⁷ of the opposite term, *horaion* (ὥραϊον). It is dedicated to elderly Littias, dead at one hundred years of age, leaving his children a lament at its proper time:

- (i) Λιττίας. Χοιρίνη. Λυσιστράτη.
- (ii) εὐδαίμων ἔθανον δεκάδας δέκ' ἐτῶν διαμείψας, |
ὥραϊον πένθος παισὶν ἐμοῖσι λιπών.⁶⁸

Littias. Choirine. Lysistrate.
I have died happy after passing through ten decades

But let us return to the epitaphs dedicated to the young. The following example, which we will look at more closely, is composed of a marble stele with loutrophoros, and the following inscription in elegiac distichs:

πότνια Σωφροσύνη θύγατερ μεγάλοφρονος Αἰδὸς, |
πλεῖστά σε τιμήσας εὐπόλεμόν τε Ἀρετήν |
Κλειδήμος Μελιτεὺς Κλειδημίδο ἐνθάδε κείται, |
ζῆλος πατρί ποτ' ὄνυ, μητρί δὲ νῦν ὁ δόνη[ν].⁶⁹

*Lady Sophrosyne, daughter of great-minded Aidos,
one who has given much honour to you and to Arete, good in war,
Kleidemos of Melite, son of Kleidemides, lies here,
once the source of his father's pride, now of his mother's pain.*

In the praise of Kleidemos, the terms *sophrosyne* (σωφροσύνη) and *arete* (ἀρετή) are used; in this case I have chosen to simply transcribe and capitalize them, instead of applying my usual translation of 'good judgement' and 'excellence', respectively. While both of these are very common in epitaphs of men and women, this example is especially interesting because both nouns are developed and taken to the 'masculine' sphere, at least in the case of Excellence, described as *good in war*.

In the very stylistically refined final verse, the father and mother are mentioned, but not their shared pain, as in other epitaphs; instead, this epigram stresses the pride (ζῆλος) that the father once (πότε) felt, and the mother's intense pain (δόνη) now (νῦν). The term *odyne* (δόνη) – making its one appearance here, out of the entire corpus – is used in very precise fashion: a generic name for physical pain, it becomes specialized as typically female, especially in reference to the pain of childbirth, the mother's pain.⁷⁰

Thanks to preservation of the marble stele where a loutrophoros is represented, we have the information that the boy perished before marriage, while the epigram does not make this explicit. This epitaph from the heart of the Classical age, between the fifth and fourth centuries BC, thus confirms the usefulness of studying text and image together, of not separating the physical support, intended to be seen and to remain, from verses that obviously were not shared in any other oral or written context. The loutrophoros provides complementary information to the epigram, and at least partly contradicts a rather widespread idea that the topic of death before marriage, 'being suitable for deceased females, is restricted, in the archaic and classical periods, to young unmarried girls'.⁷¹ The truth is that marble loutrophoroi indicate the graves of those dead before marriage, of either sex, but they are more frequent on the graves of men than of women, who married much earlier.⁷² Another funerary monument from the fourth century BC represents a similar case to that of Kleidemos's memorial. There are two fragments of a marble stele, where we see a man seated and a youth

standing, in addition to a loutrophoros. The inscription is as follows:

[σ]ῆς δ᾿ἀρετῆς καὶ σωφροσύνης μνημεῖον ἅπασιν |
[λείπ]ῃς οἰκτρὰ παθὼν Μοίρας ὕπο, δαίμονος ἐχθροῦ.⁷³

*You have left to everyone a remembrance of your excellence and good judgement
After suffering the piteous lot of Moira, hateful divinity.*

The presence of the loutrophoros can help us better understand these two verses and infer that the terrible destiny spoken of here is precisely that cruel death that snatches away youths in the prime of life.⁷⁴

The following example, from the mid-fourth century BC, is a very explicit epitaph about the pain caused by an untimely death, specifically, death before marriage. It is written in elegiac distichs:

(i) Πλαγγὼν | Προμάχου | Λακεδαιμονίου.
(ii) οὐ σε γάμος πρόπολος, Πλαγγὼν, Ὑμέναιος ἐν οἴκοις |
ὥλβισεν, ἀλλ' ἐδάκρυσε ἐκτὸς ἀποφθιμένην· |
σῶι δὲ πάθει μήτηρ καταλείβεται, οὐδέ ποτ' αὐτὴν |
λείπουσι θρήνων πενθίδιοι στεναχαί.⁷⁵

*Plangon, daughter of Promachos, of Lacedaemonia.
Plangon, the servant of weddings, Hymenaios,
gave you no happiness at home, but, outside, he wept for you, dead:
because of your misfortune your mother sheds constant tears and
the mournful complaints of the threnodies never leave her.*

This epitaph develops the topic ‘death before marriage’ in a very elaborate fashion. *Hymenaios* himself, the servant of weddings, intervenes in an image that contrasts happiness and mourning (ὥλβισεν / ἐδάκρυσε): the young girl will not receive *Hymenaios*’ blessing at home, but will be mourned outside the home (ἐν οἴκοις / ἐκτός). The meaning of this opposition is not clear at first glance. The mother’s importance in the epitaph, her prominence in the mourning, leads one to think that the girl still lives in her parents’ home. In that case, perhaps through the expression *en oikois* (ἐν οἴκοις), in the first line, it alludes to the girl’s future home, once married. If this is so, both *en oikois* (ἐν οἴκοις) and *ektos* (ἐκτός) would refer to *Hymenaios*. There is no need to think that the girl has died *ektos*, outside the home, for whatever reason, but that *Hymenaios* was not able to accompany her and give her happiness in her new life; instead he mourns her premature death, outside the new home.⁷⁶

In this epitaph, dedicated by a mother to her daughter, the verb *kataleibo* (καταλείβεται) attracts my attention. Meaning ‘distil, drip’, in the funerary epigrams it appears on this occasion only. In general, the poets used this verb on few occasions, and in passages referring specifically to honey, wine, sweat or tears. I have translated it as ‘sheds constant tears’ because I understand this to be the image intended by the author. Moreover, it may be possible to relate this expression to the language of contemporary tragedy;

in particular, I recall two passages from Euripides that express pain similar to that described here. Namely, in *The Trojan Women*, Hecuba weeps for her children, δάκρυά τ'εκ δακρύων καταλείβεται ἀμετέροισι δόμοις, 'tears born from tears are poured out all through our house';⁷⁷ in *The Suppliants*, the chorus of mothers asks what pain can be greater than that of seeing one's children dead, ... λάβειτ', ἀμφίπολοι, / γραΐας ἀμενοῦς (οὐ γὰρ ἔνεστιν / ῥώμη παίδων ὑπὸ πένθους) / πολλοῦ τε χρόνου ζώσης μέτρα δὴ / καταλειβομένης τ' ἄλγεσι πολλοῖς, 'servants, take this old woman void of strength (there is no vigour left in her, due to the sorrow for her children), she has lived too long and is exhausted from much pain'.⁷⁸ This second example would be the most similar to our epigram, although I have translated the participle καταλειβομένης with a concise 'exhausted'.

In reality, the verb is not easily translated, it requires an explanation. Benveniste offers some interesting comments on the matter: *leibo* (like the Latin *libo*) has become specialized in religious language to mean 'making libations', but in the Greek language, the existence of another term that apparently means the same thing, *cheo* (χέω), calls for a finer distinction. To be precise, *cheo* indicates that a liquid pours abundantly, while *leibo* is 'to distil, to drip'. The semantic specialization that takes *leibo* into the worship sphere coexists with a generic value already present in Homer, in expressions like, precisely, *dakrya leibein* (δάκρυα λείβειν), 'shed tears'.⁷⁹ In the epitaph that we presently consider, no object is mentioned: the tears are not named, it merely states, *meter kataleibetai* (μήτηρ καταλείβεται): the mother disintegrates, is spent, she melts, drop by drop ... The indication of weeping in a funerary context goes without saying.

Also from the mid-fourth century BC is the following epigram, composed of twelve verses arranged in groups of four. The first eight are poorly preserved, but the last part can be read perfectly:

(iii) ὦ μελέα μήτηρ καὶ ὁμαίμονες ὅς τέ σ' ἔφυσεν |
 Μειδοτέλης αὐτῷ πῆμα, Κλεοπτολέμη, |
 οἱ γόνον, οὐ θάλαμον τὸν σὸν προσορῶσι θανούσης |
 θρήνόν τε ἀντ' ἀνδρὸς καὶ τάφον ἀντὶ γάμου.⁸⁰

Oh wretched mother, relatives and your father
Meidoteles, what misfortune for him, Kleoptoleme,
with you dead, they contemplate not the marriage bed but the lament,
the threnody instead of a husband, the grave instead of a wedding.

Despite the poorly preserved state of the first part of the epitaph, we can clearly read in the second verse *dodeketis* (δωδεκέτις), whereby we have an indication of the girl's age, twelve years old. In the following verses only the beginning is well preserved, but what we read is quite significant: in the fifth verse, ὦ πολύκλαυθ' Ἄϊδη, *Oh, Hades, cause of great weeping!*, and in the sixth verse, the verb *herpasas* (ἥρπασας), *you snatched away*, denoting violent abduction, whereby we have the image of abduction by Hades, very

appropriate for the epitaph of young Kleoptoleme.

This time in hexameters, another interesting epitaph comes to us from Attica:

ἦδε χθ^{ὺν} ἐκ^εάλυψε Κλεὼ τὴν σώφρονα πάντα |
δύσμορον ἡλικίας ὀλοφύρεται ἢ σε τεκοῦσα, |
σοὺς τε κασιγνήτους λυποῦσα ἔθανες, <δῆμου φῶς, |
σὴν αὖξουσ' ἀρετὴν καὶ σωφροσύνην ἐρατεινὴν.⁸¹

*This soil has covered Kleo, sensible in all things,
ill-fated in her youth. Your mother mourns you
And with your death you have saddened your brothers, o light of the town,
you whose excellence and sweet good judgement you made to shine.*

Worthy of note in this epitaph is the mention of the city. The death of the maiden Kleo has saddened her mother and brothers, but the girl is also commemorated as δῆμου φῶς, the town joins in the mourning. The death of Kleo is mourned by a community that laments the loss of a girl, probably from the aristocracy, who has gone, taking with her the hopes of her family and of her possible suitors.⁸²

As we pass from the fourth to the third century BC, I wish to focus our attention on the following epitaph from Thessaly, in elegiac distichs, full of elements alluding to immortal fame:

Ἀλκινόας κόυραν λεῦσσε, ξένε, καὶ Μενεκόρρου |
Τιμάνδραν, ἥβας τὰν στέρισε αἶσα λυγρά |
τᾶς ἀρετὰν αὖξοντες ἀείμαστον συνόμαιμοι |
οὐκ ἀκλεῶς φθιμέναν τῷιδε τάφῳ κτέρισαν.⁸³

*Look, stranger, upon the maiden daughter of Alkinoas and Menekorros,
upon Timandra, her youth snatched away by a sad destiny,
her siblings glorifying her memorable excellence,
dead not without fame, they honoured her with this tomb.*

In this poem the use of *leussein* (λεῦσσε) in the first verse deserves particular comment. In Bruno Snell's careful examination of the different verbs used in Homeric poems to allude to sight, he verified that all of them emphasize a specific manner of looking. It's something beyond the function of sight, something that has to do more with the object that is being observed and the feelings that accompany the act of seeing.⁸⁴ The verb that interests us here, *leussein* (λεῦσσειν) is related etymologically to *leukos* (λευκός), 'brilliant', and had a very specific meaning: to look upon something luminous. It also implied a kind of looking with pride, happily, and therefore, was never used in reference to a worried or fearful look.⁸⁵ This use disappeared from later Greek prose, but not from poetry, and we find it again in the epitaph for Timandra. Another epitaph, one of those attributed to Simonides in the *Palatine Anthology*, is very illustrative of the meaning of the verb *leussein*: Ἀνθρῶπ' οὐ Κροίσου λεύσσεις τάφον, ἀλλὰ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς /

ἡερνήτω μικρὸς τύμβος, ἔμοι δ' ἱκανός ('Man, you are not looking on the tomb of Kroisos, but a poor man needs only a little mound, and for me it is enough').⁸⁶ It seems clear that the use of *leusso* is motivated by the allusion to Kroisos of Lydia: οὐ Κροῖσου λεύσσεις τάφον, we might paraphrase, 'you are not standing before the brilliant tomb of Kroisos'.

Returning to the epitaph in question, the object of the verb *leussein* is *kouran* (κούραν), a maiden who is noted for her *arete* and who has died not without fame, *ouk akleos* (οὐκ ἀκλεῶς). As we have seen in the Phrasikleia epitaph, the alliteration of κ- in the first verse emphasizes the value of the term *akleos* in the last verse; in short, it draws our attention to *kleos*, the ultimate purpose of the epitaph. If my suggestion about the value of λεύσσειν in this epigram is correct, the first verse would say something like, 'Look with admiration, stranger, upon the maiden daughter ...'

Another marble stele, with a relief representing a loutrophoros, bears the following epitaph in elegiac distichs.

- (i) [Εὐθ]ύκριτος ?[Εἰτε]αῖος
(ii) ἐνθάδε τὸν πάσης ἀρετῆς ἐπὶ τ' ἔρμα μολόντα |
[Ε]ὐθύκριτον πατρία χθὼν | ἐκάλυψε τάφωι, |
μητρὶ φίλον καὶ πατρὶ κασι | νῆταις τε ποθεινὸν |
πᾶσ' τε ἑταῖροισιν σύντροφο[ν] | ἡλικίας.⁸⁷

Euthykritos of Eiteai

Here, having reached the end of all excellence,

Euthykritos is covered by his native soil with a mound,

loved by his mother and his father and longed for by his sisters

and by all his hetairoi who grew up with him.

On the loutrophoros, which indicates that the youth has died before marriage, we find a man and a nude youth both standing, each of them accompanied by a dog. Might the youth's nudity, together with the presence of dogs, be an allusion to hunting as one of his pastimes? The aristocratic scenario is evoked both by the nude (in this case heroic, not only erotic) and by the mention of companions, the *hetairoi*, noblemen united through strong ties of loyalty. The figure of *pistos hetairos* (πιστὸς ἑταῖρος), 'faithful friend', will be analysed in the next chapter.

Finally, we turn to another epitaph of a young man, probably dead prior to marriage and received by the chamber of Persephone. This is an unusual epigram, one of the longest of the period, preserved on a marble stele and composed of elegiac distichs. Between the first two couplets and the next three, we can read part of the name Dionysius, identified as a cousin of the orator Hypereides.⁸⁸

- (i) ὁθεὶς μόχθος ἔπαινον ἐπ' ἀνδράσι τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσιν |
ζητεῖν, ἡῦρηται δὲ ἄφθονος εὐλογία |
ἧς σὺ τυχὼν ἔθανες, Διονύσιε, καὶ τὸν ἀνάνκης |
κοινὸν Φερσεφόνης πᾶσιν ἔχεις θάλαμον.

- (ii) [Vestigia incerta nominis] Διονύσιος Ἀλφίνο.
 (iii) σῶμα μὲν ἐνθάδε σόν, Διονύσιε, γαῖα, καλύπτει, |
 ψυχὴν δὲ ἀθάνατον κοινὸς ἔχει ταμίας |
 σοῖς δὲ φίλοις καὶ μητρὶ κασιγνήταις τε λέλοιπας |
 πένθος ἀείμνηστον σῆς φιλίας φθίμενος |
 δισσαὶ δ' αὖ πατρίδες σ' ἡ μὲν φύσει, ἡ δὲ νόμοισιν |
 ἔστρεξαν πολλῆς εἵνεκα σωφροσύνης.⁸⁹

*There is no weariness in finding praise for noble men
 and plentiful tribute can be found.*

*You have died after gaining this tribute, Dionysius, and from Ananke,
 from Persephone, you have the chamber common to all.*

[...] Dionysius son of Alphinos.

*Here the soil hides your body, Dionysius,
 but the immortal soul is held by the common lord.*

*You have left to your friends and your mother and your sisters,
 by dying, a pain that will always recall your love:*

*and two homelands, one by nature and the other by law,
 loved you for your plentiful good judgment.*

Dionysius was an Athenian, a cleruch sent to Samos. The penultimate line refers to this double status: δισσαὶ δ' αὖ πατρίδες σ' ἡ μὲν φύσει, ἡ δὲ νόμοισιν, 'two homelands, one by nature and the other by law'. As for the eschatological allusions that may be inferred from both the epitaph and the decoration of the memorial, no claims can be made with certainty, but I will point out the most striking facts.

The epigram mentions the chamber of a Persephone who is considered as *Ananke*;⁹⁰ this chamber is spoken of as *common* (κοινός), in an expression that we return to in our final chapter, possibly alluding to a community of initiates. The second part of the epitaph also includes a mention of the separation of body and soul, and the latter is described as immortal, a very unusual affirmation for this era (mid-fourth century BC), according to what we have seen *supra* when studying the Pausimache memorial. A final eschatological reference is found in referring to a *koinos tamias* (κοινὸς ταμίας), literally: 'common distributor', namely, of souls, who can be no other than Hermes.⁹¹ This divine being, better known as *psychopompos*, conductor of souls, is also *psychotamias*, charged with leaving each soul in its corresponding place in the Underworld.⁹²

This monument, which was found in Kerameikos, consists of a marble stele with pediment and base. It is not decorated with a relief but with a painting showing a man or a woman standing on the left and a man, probably Dionysius, sitting on the right. Above the monument there is a pillar superimposed with a bull (Dionysiac symbol). Two lions are placed on the right and the left. All these characteristics of the funerary epigram and monument lead us to think that young Dionysius had been initiated into mystery rites of some kind, possibly Eleusinian, or perhaps more likely, Bacchic.

This peribolos of Dionysius, son of Alphinus, was one of the most ostentatious of the Kerameikos. The appearance and development of periboloi (groups of graves surrounded by an enclosure wall) is a characteristic of funerary art from the late fifth and fourth centuries BC.

Since the memorials studied here are no longer exclusive to the wealthier classes in the Classical period (in contrast to the Archaic), costly constructions like this one clearly stand out from the rest.⁹³

Dated mostly to the fourth century BC, the epitaphs analysed in this chapter illustrate a shift in conventions regarding use of the formula 'X set me/this marker (*sema* or *mnema*) up for Y'. Earlier, women only employed this formula (in other words, they only appeared as dedicants) on memorials dedicated to sons who had died in their youth. In contrast, in the epigrams discussed in this chapter, mothers – sometimes alone and sometimes mentioned together with the father – lament the loss not only of sons, but also of daughters who died before marrying.⁹⁴ However, what has not been documented to date in the fourth century BC is the existence of verse epitaphs dedicated by women to female friends. The epitaph from the late fifth century BC that a woman, Euthylla, dedicated to her friend Biote, an exceptional text with which I shall commence the next chapter (analysing funerary epigrams in which the bonds between dedicant and deceased are those of friendship rather than family ties), did not apparently enjoy any continuity in the Classical period.

Immortal Remembrance of Friends

Among the memorials that form the basis of our study, it is quite rare for dedicants to be friends of the deceased, and not his or her closest family members. Nonetheless, *philia* has also left its mark on the epitaphs of Archaic and Classical Greece. The texts that I will analyse in this chapter belong to the sixth and fifth centuries BC and are not continued in the metrical epitaphs of the fourth century BC,¹ when an apparently wider variety may actually hide greater conventionalism, at least in the relationships observed between the memorials' protagonists. It is the desire to devote a few pages to a subject I consider very interesting but which has received much less attention, namely the information that these memorials provide about the existence of deep ties of friendship between men, but also and especially between women, that has led me to interrupt the chronological order of this book and step back in this chapter to the end of the Archaic period.

In the first part of this chapter I will analyse the epitaph that a woman, Euthylla, dedicated to her friend Biote. In the second part I examine a beautiful stele of Mnesitheus that was discovered not long ago in Boeotia, dating from the late sixth century BC. Preserved intact with its inscription, this stele was erected by the young man's lover. In the case of Biote's epitaph, we will see that the vocabulary used (*philotes* φιλότης, *hetaira* ἑταῖρα, *piste* πίστή) seems to be chosen especially to fit with David Konstan's description of friendship, drawn from a careful review of the applicable Greek lexicon: 'Taken together, the terminological complex constituted by *hetairos* and the markers *philos* and *pistos* embraces the essential elements associated with friendship: a select relationship between non-kin grounded in mutual affection ("deariness") and loyalty or trust'.² For this reason precisely I find the Biote epitaph of special interest, given that examples of friendship between women are noticeably absent from studies on this topic. In young Mnesitheus' funerary epigram it is easier to contextualize the type of relationship expressed; as far back as the mythical example of Achilles and Patroclus, the *philia* relationship between men, with varying degrees of eroticism, has been well known.³

Hetaira, in its ancient and noble sense...

On the 4th of last January (1892) a dealer in antiquities in Athens brought me a fragment of Pentelic marble bearing a metrical sepulchral inscription. He said that it was found near the Hagia Trias church, i.e., in the Ceramicus.⁴

Thus William Carey Poland begins the first published study on this late fifth-century BC epitaph, to which we now turn our attention. He had bought the marble fragment with the inscription, studied it, and being convinced that it was authentic, delivered it to the National Museum of Athens. It is currently catalogued and may be examined at the Athens Epigraphical Museum.⁵ Poland presents a very precise, hand-drawn representation of this stele in his article. The text of the epitaph follows:

πιστῆς ἡδείας τε χάρι|ν φιλότῃτος ἑταίρα|
Εὐθυλλα στήλην τήνδ'ε|πέθηκε τάφωι|
σῶι, Βιότη· μνήμηγ γάρ |αἰεὶ δακρυτὸν ἔχουσα|
ἡλικίας τῆς σῆς κλαί|ει ἀποφθιμένης.⁶

*For your faithful and sweet love, your friend
Euthylla has raised this stele over your grave,
Biote: with remembrance always filled with tears,
she weeps for your lost youth.*

This epigram is special for many reasons, but I will begin by recalling the terms in which Poland described it, more than one hundred years ago. He refers first to the deceased and to the dedicant: ‘The monument before us is a private grave-stone of the more modest class erected by a woman named Euthylla in honour of a young friend named Biote. That she was young we are justified in inferring from ἡλικίας ἀποφθιμένης. The word ἑταίρα is used here simply to designate an intimate friend and companion, in the same earlier and nobler sense in which it was used by Sappho.’⁷ Next, the author offers the following two fragments as examples of this use by Sappho of Lesbos, reproduced here as in the Eva-Maria Voigt edition:

Λάτω καὶ Νιόβ'α μάλα μὲν φίλαι ἦσαν ἑταιραι (Fr. 142)

Leto and Niobe were very dear friends

τάδε νῦν ἑταίραις
ταῖς ἔμαις †τέρπνα †κάλως ἀείσω (Fr. 160)

*now for my friends
I will sing these beautiful † ... †*

With female forms used in both appearances of *friends*, the context of the epigram is clearly identified, namely, the quite unusual case of a woman dedicating an epitaph to another woman outside of her family. However, further below we will consider the possibility that this may also be the case in other funerary stelai where the text is not preserved.

In the first verse there is another very interesting element that Poland does not mention: *philotes* (φιλότης). The term is a complex one, the kind of term that is part of the vocabulary of the culture, and as such difficult to translate. Before attempting a hypothesis about what it might mean here,

we look for general instruction to the pages of Pierre Chantraine's etymological dictionary, and to Émile Benveniste's work on the vocabulary of Indo-European institutions. The former indicates that the meaning of *philotes* is 'friendship' or 'affection', sentiments based on ties of hospitality or camaraderie, often involving the existence of a specific community. He adds that the term also means, since the time of Homer, 'sexual union'.⁸ Émile Benveniste insists on the reciprocity that is implied: 'La *philôtês* apparaît comme une "amitié" de type bien défini, qui lie et qui comporte des engagements réciproques, avec serments et sacrifices'.⁹

This is the only appearance of the word *philotes* in funerary epigraphy (at least in the corpus of metrical epitaphs published by Hansen); it thus warrants some reflection about its meaning. Let us begin with the assumption that no translation is entirely free of interpretation: one Spanish translation is based on the mistaken idea that Biote is a man's name,¹⁰ and includes this epitaph under a section entitled 'conjugal love', where the term *philotes* becomes 'love'.¹¹ By contrast, taking both names to be female, as in fact they are, we find the translations 'friendship', in Poland, and 'amitié', in a study by Calame, to which I will return later.¹² But even this reassuring translation is accompanied by further explanations: while the ancient philosophers had words only for friendship between men, even modern interpreters show some resistance to friendship between women. Poland notes the strangeness of someone outside the family dedicating the epitaph to Biote, and he poses the hypothesis that she may be a female slave who was living in Athens, far from her family. He does not exclude the option (although relegating it to a note) that she may be a *hetaira*, in the sense of a courtesan, although the meaning of *hetaira* (ἑταίρα) in this poem would still be that of 'friend', the author maintains.¹³

According to Calame, not only Biote but also Euthylla should be recognized precisely as *hetaira*-courtesans: 'La *philia* offre néanmoins un terrain où peuvent se développer entre citoyens et courtisanes, voire entre courtisanes elles-mêmes, des relations de fidélité réciproque'. Regarding this epitaph in particular, he states that 'une "compagne" (*hetaira*) consacre à une femme disparue dans la fleur de l'âge une stèle funéraire en témoignage d'une relation d'amour (*philôtês*)' – *amour* that, as we indicated, later becomes *amitié* – 'fondée sur fidélité et tendresse (*pistê, h ê deia*)'.¹⁴ The same internal inconsistency, caused by the desire to translate *philotes* as 'love' and yet not apply it to a feeling shared between women, can also be found in Poland's work, which concludes with these words: 'The little stone fell and was buried for centuries. The love – translated in the epigram as *friendship* – that created it lives on forever'.

Leaving *philotes* for the time being in its love–friendship ambiguity, we return to *hetaira*. There is a recurring tendency to understand *hetaira* as courtesan, with little room given to its sense of female friend or companion. As we have seen, this reading affects the interpretations of this epitaph, as a

possibility in Poland, and almost a certainty in Calame. Clearly, the term is a female version of the masculine *hetairos*, and has the meaning of ‘companion, friend’ in addition to the Attic-Ionic meaning of ‘courtesan’. It should also be remembered that the term is semantically related to *etes* (ἔτης), another form for ‘friend’, which emphasizes that the companions are of the same age and social class. It should be easy, then, to distinguish the use of one meaning or the other based on the context: for example, in Sappho’s verses mentioned above, we understand that Leto and Niobe are *hetairai* in the first sense of the word. And the same should be true of this epitaph, where feelings of symmetry and reciprocity are expressed through both *philotes* and *hetaira*, and their close friendship is also spoken of as being faithful, *piste* (πιστή) and sweet, *hedeia* (ἡδεία). Did not Claude Calame himself state, at the beginning of his essay, that ‘c’est d’abord par sa douceur que l’on perçoit dans la poésie archaïque grecque la force de l’amour’?¹⁵

Affection, friendship, love. One of these sentiments, or all three, led Euthylla to raise a stele to honour her friend Biote. The negligible presence of the expression of these emotions between women in the texts is comparable to the scarcity of literature composed by ancient Greek women. However, if we consider it in relative terms, we find it is not so infrequent after all: leaving aside the verses of Sappho, so controversial and belonging to another era, we have the poetry of Erinna, from the fourth century BC, who remembers her friend Baukis in fragments of *The Distaff* (ἐμὴν ἁδεῖαν ἐταῖραν, ‘my sweet friend’¹⁶) and mourns for her in a pair of epigrams of questionable attribution.¹⁷ At the end of the first epigram, we read: μοι ἂ συνεταιρὶς / Ἥρινν’ ἐν τύμβῳ γράμμ’ ἐχάραξε τόδε, ‘my companion Erinna engraved these letters on my tomb’.

It does not seem particularly unusual that friends would take part in mourning a deceased youth, whether a boy¹⁸ or a maiden.¹⁹ Returning to Poland, who discovered this stele, we find an apt comparison of the Biote epitaph with the epitaph that follows:

Ἀνθεμίδος τόδε σῆμα· κύκλῳ στεφάνουσι <ἐ>ταῖροι
μνημείων ἀρετῆς | οὐνεκα καὶ φιλίας.²⁰

*This tomb is of Anthemis. Her companions place crowns around it
in remembrance of her excellence and friendship.*

This epitaph was seen on a late fifth-century BC marble stele decorated with a painting; found in Piraeus, and since lost, our knowledge of it is based only on what we have been told by those who saw it. The old descriptions say that two women were represented on the stele: the name Herophile is inscribed on the left, above one of the paintings, and the name Anthemis on the right, above the other. We infer from the text that Anthemis died young, and although we do not know her relationship to Herophile (friend, sister, mother, etc.), the Clairmont hypothesis is quite probable,²¹ suggesting that

Herophile is named as *pars pro toto* of her companions, of the *hetairoi* who place crowns on her grave, as we read in the epigram. Curiously, Calame also associates these two epitaphs, as does Poland, and once again his interpretation is that the grave belongs to a courtesan: ‘Tout porte à croire qu’Anthémis, hétéaire, était parvenue à s’insérer dans les relations de confiance réciproque fondant l’hétairie qu’elle fréquentait.’²²

Women cannot be trusted...

Returning to the Biote epitaph, all the elements of the first verse, whether *hetaira* (ἑταῖρα) that we have just discussed, or *philotes* (φιλότης), discussed earlier, underscore a relationship of reciprocity and loyalty, further emphasized by the adjective *piste* (πιστή), ‘faithful’. It has already been noted that neither *pistos* (πιστός) nor any of its derivatives appear in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* in relation to women (with the possible exception of *Odyssey* XI 456, in a verse that is considered to be interpolated, in order to affirm that women cannot be trusted: ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι πιστὰ γυναιξίν). In Homer, the expression *pistos hetairos* (πιστὸς ἑταῖρος), ‘faithful friend’, is reserved for male friendship, indicating a very specific type of relationship and personal feeling that goes beyond that of battlefield camaraderie (*hetaireia*).²³ In Homeric poetry we find clear examples of the importance of such ties, always between men, and the variety of possible overtones. Thus, aside from the possibly erotic nature of the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, the latter’s fundamental role is that of reliable counsellor to Achilles, the same role that Nestor plays in relation to Agamemnon, or Polydamas to Hector.²⁴

The importance of this quality, of being *pistos*, trustworthy, is seen in an epitaph from the fourth century BC where the name of the deceased appears out of meter;²⁵ however, the inscription proudly proclaims that he has won the nickname of *Faithful*:

- (i) [τόνο]|| α μὲν τόμον καὶ ἐμ ὁ πατὴρ ἦδε ἀγορεύ[ει] |
[στή]λη καὶ πάτραν· πιστῶν δὲ ἔργων ἔνεκα ἔσχο[ν] |
[Πίσ]τος ἐπωνυμίαν, οὐ σπάνις ἀνδρὶ τυχεῖν.
(ii) Πραξῖνος | Τερεΐα | Αἰγινήτης.²⁶

*This stele bespeaks my name, that of my father,
and my homeland. On account of my trustworthy deeds I have won
the nickname of Faithful, rarely attained by a man.
Praxinos, son of Tereias, from Aigina.*

In the Biote epigram, the adjective is applied to *philotes*, and offers a testimony of friendship and faithfulness between women, of particular interest in a social framework that entirely overlooks the topic of such relationships.

I want to insist that the translations ‘friend’ and ‘hetera’ (courtesan) for

the term *hetaira* are both perfectly acceptable. But, in specific instances, both meanings are not possible simultaneously. If we consider that the epitaph is the preferred vehicle for celebrating the virtues of the deceased, and that, at least in this era, women's professions were seldom mentioned therein (except for some cases of nursemaids and priestesses), it is very unlikely (if not simply unbelievable) that a woman would be remembered and praised by another as a 'courtesan'. This reasoning excludes Claude Calame's interpretation. As for Poland's apparently naïve interpretation, alluding to the 'noble' sense of the word *hetaira* in Sappho, I consider it neither ingenuous nor misguided. The poetry of Sappho has been subject to very controversial interpretations over the centuries, constituting quite a thorny chapter in the history of Greek literature, impossible to summarize here. But if I must express my opinion (although tentative), I would lean towards Poland's interpretation, supporting it with some words from the famous essay 'Against Interpretation', by Susan Sontag. Allow me to explain.

In the late twentieth century, there were a number of voices within American criticism that reacted strongly against the image of a *Sappho Schoolmistress*, a view from the nineteenth century that pictured Sappho leading a circle of girls whom she instructed in music and song and to whom she addressed her poems. This reaction was in turn answered by other scholars of such calibre as Bruno Gentili. One of the more controversial points is that, according to the new interpretation (ascribed especially, but not exclusively, to gender studies), the homoeroticism perceived in Sappho's poems was not addressed to girls, nor did it have any religious, ritual or pedagogical value. Instead, it addressed the poet's peers and its meaning was fully erotic. The details of this controversy and its proponents are perfectly reflected in an article by Bruno Gentili and Carmine Catenacci,²⁷ whereby I excuse myself from delving at length into an already familiar topic.

There are serious arguments on both sides, but, in my opinion, the problem is distorted because the Sappho texts have long suffered the abuse of interpretation. Here is where I recall the words of Sontag: 'Interpretation thus presupposes a discrepancy between the clear meaning of the text and the demands of (later) readers. It seeks to resolve that discrepancy. The situation is that for some reason a text has become unacceptable; yet it cannot be discarded. Interpretation is a radical strategy for conserving an old text, which is thought too precious to repudiate, by revamping it. The interpreter, without actually erasing or rewriting the text, is altering it. But he can't admit to doing this. He claims to be only making it intelligible, by disclosing its true meaning.'²⁸ It is evident that the poems of Sappho reveal strong feelings between women, expressed perhaps for the first time, or at least, for the first time in preserved texts. At the same time, the morally and ideologically charged nature of many translations and interpretations of Sappho's poetry is undeniable.

The question is complex; in order to focus on the epitaph at hand, I will

limit myself to two concerns. First, both Sappho's poetry and this funerary epigram, each in its own context, are in some sense exceptions. There are no other remains of Archaic Greek poetry from female authors with which to compare the preserved fragments from Sappho. And, as far as I know, we have no other epitaph where one woman has erected a memorial to another, without there being any family tie. This lack of context has led readers to look elsewhere for models. To explain Sappho's poetry, and specifically the relationship that connected her to the women addressed in her verses, many different types of comparisons have been made (comparisons to Alcaeus and his *hetairia*; to Socrates and his disciples; even, defying the anachronism, to 'young ladies' finishing schools'). In the case of the epigram dedicated to Biote, its uniqueness has led either to misinterpretation (as in the case mentioned, interpreting Biote to be a man's name, and therefore, a husband mourned by his wife) or to associating it with the world of courtesans, apparently more familiar than that of female friendship.

The second matter that I wish to bring out has to do directly with the first: the literary tradition beginning with Homer has delved deeply into the topic of friendship between men. It is not just an anecdote that Montaigne, author of the most admirable pages on friendship, would expressly state that the female sex is incapable of this type of relationship.²⁹ Of course the situation has changed, and Montaigne no longer represents the *communis opinio* on the topic, but the study of friendship between women in the ancient world remains unexplored, due to a lack of sources.

With these premises, my opinion about the epitaph dedicated to Biote can be summarized as follows: the context rules out the idea of courtesans, and also excludes any family relationship between the dedicant and the deceased; the lexicon used belongs to the semantic field of friendship sentiments, and probably, of love; the degree of intimacy between Biote and Euthylla is difficult to determine, and if we seek a comparison with the verses of Sappho, it ought to be in the sense of expanding our knowledge about relationships and friendship ties between women in the ancient Greek world. To use our relatively modern categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality does not help at all in understanding the poetry of Sappho or that of her male contemporaries. But if we add this epitaph to the surviving Sapphic poems that speak to her *hetairai*, it may help us gain a somewhat better understanding of friendship/love between ancient Greeks, and more specifically, of friendship/love between women.

To conclude my discussion of this memorial, I shall turn to iconographic representations, and in particular, to an interesting image that may also be of a funerary nature, although this is not completely certain. I refer to the stele of Pharsalus.³⁰

This particular image reminds me of the study by Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, regarding the representation of female homoeroticism in Attic ceramics.³¹ One of this author's conclusions is that neither pederasty nor

heterosexuality can help us in deciphering possible expressions of female homoeroticism; the latter, besides being much less explicit, shares neither the age asymmetry typical of pederastic courtship scenes, nor the asymmetry of power and/or violence commonly observed in representations of heterosexuality. Here we have an image that supports this conclusion and evokes the *piste* and *hedeia philotes* of the Biote epitaph.

Much has been written about this piece, and although naturally there is no single, unanimously accepted opinion, there is some consensus about its homoerotic nature.³² On the one hand, although it is an argument *ex silentio*, the fact that the two women are not shaking hands with the *dexiosis* gesture would indicate that they are not linked by family ties.³³ On the other hand, the iconography is clearly erotic, with the presence of lotus flowers that the two women seem to be exchanging or showing to each other, and the ‘hands up and down gesture’³⁴ that is associated with courtship images. Also fully applicable to this image are the following words written about other images with a clearly sexual content, such as the famous Macron cup: ‘l’échange des regards se double de gestes d’offrande et de réception de cadeaux (bourse, couronne, fleur) ainsi que de contacts mutuels’.³⁵



Figure 5.1 The stele of Pharsalus, c. 470–460 BC, Thessaly. Louvre Museum: 701 © Bridgeman Images.

While it may be true that there are few images and texts acknowledging

the existence of *philotes*-based relations between women, it also seems true that the biased interpretations of such evidence often contribute to the sense of ‘strangeness’, through distortions of trying to fit them into the patterns of pederasty or heterosexuality, or because the term *hetaira* itself, in its ancient and noble sense, does not have the evocative power of the courtesan.

As a final remark on the Biote stele, I recall one of the many noteworthy facts that William Carey Poland pointed out in 1892 in his article on the recently discovered piece – perhaps partly to justify so much attention given to a simple stone: the epitaph has also provided us with a proper name that was heretofore unknown: Euthylla, the dedicant of the monument. However, a later discovery brings a Euthylla who, according to the editors of the text, would be the same Euthylla who dedicated the memorial we have just studied. This Pentelic marble stele, dating to the fourth century BC, was discovered on 5 May 1938 in the Agora:

[E]ϋθυλλ[α ----] / θυγάτη[ρ----] / λ ευκον[οέως γυνή]36

If the Euthylla who appears here is indeed the same one who dedicated the stele to Biote, the fact that on her own stele she is mentioned as *gyne* (γυνή), ‘wife’, reminds us once again that arguing a possible erotic link between Euthylla and Biote does not in the least imply talking about an exclusive homosexuality or using contemporary categories to explain the sexual practices of the ancient Greeks.³⁷

The everlasting love of Mnesitheus

A fortunate archaeological discovery from 1992 restored to us a stele whose image and accompanying inscription are both perfectly preserved, and where once again the dedicant is not related to the deceased person through family ties.

Found in the Acraephia necropolis in Boeotia and dated between 520 and 510 BC,³⁸ this stele represents a nude boy, in profile and turned towards the left, holding a rooster in his left hand while raising a flower to his nose with his right. Between his left leg and the edge of the stele, an elegiac distich in the Archaic alphabet of Boeotia can be read. At the foot of the stele, the artist’s signature, Philergos. It is made of Hymettus marble and is the work of an Attic workshop that was heavily under influence from Ionia.³⁹ The text, inscribed in *stoichedon*,⁴⁰ is as follows:

Μνασιθεῖ $\bar{\theta}$ μν $\bar{\epsilon}$ μ’ εἰ $\bar{\mu}$ ἔπ’ ὀδ $\bar{\theta}$ 1 καλόν· ἀλ<λ>ὰ μ’ ἔθ $\bar{\epsilon}$ κεν
 Πύ<ρ>ριχος ἀρχαί $\bar{\epsilon}$ ς ἀντὶ φιλ $\bar{\epsilon}$ μοσύν $\bar{\epsilon}$ ς.
 Φιλ $\bar{\theta}$ ργος ἐποί $\bar{\epsilon}$ σεν.⁴¹

I am the lovely memorial of Mnesitheus, beside the road. I was placed by

The text of the stele is framed in the setting of a *philia* (φιλία) relationship between two men, a type of relationship that often occurred within the aristocratic world where one of the two was often younger.⁴³ Quite remarkable is the use of the term *philemosyne* (φιλεμοσύνη), very infrequent and entirely equivalent to *philia* and *philotes*.⁴⁴ This term only appears in one of the funerary inscriptions forming the corpus established by Hansen, CEG 32, which I translated in Chapter 3; namely, the epitaph dedicated by a father to his two sons. It reads as follows: σῆμα τόδε : Κύλον : παίδοι<ν>| ἐπέθεκε{ν} : θανό<ν>τοι- : / μ<ν>ῆμα| φιλεμοσύνης : ... *This tomb was raised by Cylon for his two dead sons, / a memorial of affection ...* Recently, Emanuele Dettori has written about *philemosyne*.⁴⁵ In relation to CEG 32, he maintains that since the purpose of the inscriptions was to give tribute to whatever the deceased had left behind on Earth worthy of remembrance, in this case the father wanted to immortalize the *philemosyne* of his sons.⁴⁶ Although this is obviously true, I do not believe it follows – as Dettori claims – that one must therefore reject Angeliki Andreiomenou’s interpretation of Mnesitheus’ memorial, according to which the term *philemosyne* refers to a reciprocal feeling between Mnesitheus and Pyrrhichos.⁴⁷ According to Dettori, rather than commemorating an affective relationship between the two, the dedicant Pyrrhichos’ intention in raising the memorial was to express gratitude for the *philemosyne* of the deceased, Mnesitheus. He bases this reading on his interpretation of CEG 32. In my opinion, this line of reasoning is not entirely logical. To begin with, he takes what was merely a hypothesis to be true, namely that in CEG 32, the dedicant Cylon is celebrating his sons’ love in a unidirectional manner: his sons’ love towards him. Based on this premise, he infers that the dedicant of Mnesitheus’ stele is commemorating the *philemosyne* of the deceased and not a reciprocal feeling between the dedicant and the young man who died. I do not see the need to render these options exclusive: quite the contrary. There is no doubt that one celebrates *philemosyne*, the affection that the sons showed their father in life and the other, Mnesitheus’ affection for Pyrrhichos, but I believe it is equally unquestionable that in both cases, the affective relationship and the sentiment immortalized on the memorial was mutual. Otherwise, the very existence of the funerary monument would be inexplicable.

Dettori insists that *philemosyne* is an individual feeling that does not imply the existence of a mutual relationship; however, neither does it exclude one, which would make no sense in this context and would render the memorials dedicated by Cylon and Pyrrhichos absurd. Even translating, as I have done, ἀρχαίῃς ἀντὶ φιλῆμοσύνῃς as ‘a reward for everlasting love’, in other words interpreting this funerary memorial as a tribute to Mnesitheus’ love for Pyrrhichos, it is obvious that the reciprocity of this feeling is evidenced by the very existence of the memorial.

The idea that *philemosyne* is an individual feeling, an unreciprocated affection, also leads Dettori to focus on the differences rather than the similarities between the epigram dedicated to Mnesitheus and the next epigram, attributed to Simonides:

Σῆμα Θεόγνιδός εἰμι Σινωπέος, ᾧ μ' ἐπέθηκεν
Γλαῦκος, ἔταιρείης ἀντὶ πολυχρονίου.⁴⁸

*I am the tomb of Theognis of Sinope, for whom
Glaukos placed me in recompense for a long friendship.*

Where other authors have seen a clear parallel, Dettori in contrast suggests that in Simonides' poem, Glaukos erects a monument as a reward for the friendship shown to him by Theognis and refers to her as *ἔταιρείη* (*hetaireia*), thus using a well-known term that indicates a clear mutual bond in the context of a political community. Such is not the case, he insists, of the stele that Pyrrhichos erected to reward Mnesitheus' *philemosyne* towards him. For my part, I remain unconvinced by this argument: while I understand that *philemosyne* does not necessarily imply reciprocity, in contexts such as these, far from excluding reciprocity, *philemosyne* demands it.

As for the translation of *archaies* (ἀρχαίης), I would propose 'everlasting' rather than 'old', although I do not discard the opinion of Angeliki Andreiomenou, who discovered the memorial: given that at least one of the protagonists was young in age, the term should not be given its usual sense of 'old', 'from long ago', but rather a sense of 'constant', 'tried and true' or 'deep'.⁴⁹ As to the meaning of *anti*, I do not agree with the idea that in the funerary epigraphy it must always mean 'in place of' rather than 'in return of'.⁵⁰ What I specifically disagree with is the idea of exclusively and systematically opting for one of these two readings. In this particular case, I have elected to translate *archaies anti philemosyne* as 'as a reward for everlasting love', which does not mean negating, obviously, that the memorial is there, before our eyes, whereas we can no longer see the love that once existed between Mnesitheus and Pyrrhichos. The sensual memorial commemorating Mnesitheus is a reward for his everlasting love, and at the same time a proxy, still capable of moving us, for an emotion whose protagonists have vanished.

Regarding the stele itself, unlike what we have seen with the Biote inscription, the elegiac distich is accompanied by an image with very clear symbolism, leaving no doubt about an erotic interpretation of the memorial. To begin, there is the rooster as the main gift which the *erastes* presents to the *eromenos*: the rooster has been accepted by the *eromenos* (to use Attic terms) in the same way as, after his death, the monument has been accepted by the *eromenos* and, presumably, his family. In addition, the flower (a lotus), which appears in other funerary stelai, has sexual overtones here as well,⁵¹ as another erotic type of present.



Figure 5.2 Grave stele of Mnesitheus, c. 520–510 BC, Boeotia. Archaeological Museum of Thebes: 28200. Drawing by Laura González Prieto.

While it is true that there are few burial monuments with inscriptions from *erastai* (ἐρασταί) to *eromenoi* (ἐρώμενοι) or vice versa, I believe we cannot consider them entirely exceptional, especially in the light of continuing new archaeological discoveries. It is a fact that the dedicant is usually a very close relative,⁵² but in this case, as in the Biote stele,⁵³ the dedicant who raises a stele for a loved one has no family connection whatsoever.

Although the examples of homoerotic representations in funerary iconography are not plentiful, the Mnesitheus stele immediately reminds us of another interesting memorial,⁵⁴ which regrettably lacks an inscription. This piece in marble was discovered in 1988 in Ialysos, Rhodes, and dated c. 470–460.⁵⁵ The *erastes* and the *eromenos* are both shown, the latter is seen receiving a rooster, *erotikon doron*. A life-size youth (1.83 metres), turned to the right, is represented giving a rooster to a young boy, who turns towards him in a very similar position to that of Mnesitheus, represented on a much smaller scale, emphasizing dependency. Both figures are nude, and the younger one holds the present given him by the *erastes* in both hands, while turning to look at him. As we look upon the youth, whom we can identify as the deceased, placing his gift in the hands of his *eromenos*, we notice not only the erotic symbolism but also a certain air of melancholy farewell, in tune with the funerary nature of the stele.⁵⁶

The prosperity of the aristocratic families on Rhodes, hence their patronage, must have had much to do with this type of artistic creation, undoubtedly contemporaneous with other manifestations exalting the island's nobility, such as Pindar's *Olympian* 7, commissioned by Diagoras.⁵⁷

Thus, we would not hesitate to claim that dedicants who appear on the stelai and have no family connection are linked to the deceased by bonds of friendship.⁵⁸ The Biote epitaph from the Classical age, and the Mnesitheus epitaph in Archaic Boeotia, confirm that *philia* can also leave its immortal mark in stone.

For love of a boy ... he lost his life in battle

We cannot conclude this chapter without mentioning an intriguing epigram that offers new, clear evidence of the existence of homoerotic relationships between males, and the possibility that such ties could become sufficient motivation for one of them to dedicate a memorial at the death of the other. This inscription is considered votive by some editors and funerary by others, the latter opinion now prevailing.⁵⁹ In this Attic text from the late sixth century BC, contemporary with the Mnesitheus stele, the funerary monument itself addresses us, in hexameters:

(i) ἐνθάδ' ἀνὴρ ὄμοσε[ν κα]τὰ ἡ ὄρκια παιδὸς ἐρα[σ]θίς
 νείκεα συνμείσχι[ν] (sic) πόλεμόν θ' ἄμα δα|κρυόεντα.

Γναθίο, | τ̃ σφυχὲ (sic) ὄλετ' ἐ[ν δαί], | ἡ ἱερός εἰμι⁶⁰ |

τ̃ ἡ ἑροιάδο.

(ii) [Γνά] αἰεὶ σπευδε[-]⁶¹

*Here a man committed himself with vows for the love of a boy
to engage in battles and in tearful war.
To Gnathios, who lost his life in battle, I am consecrated,
to the son of Heroiades.⁶²
Gnathios, always –*

The aristocratic origin of the deceased is indicated by the appearance of σπευδε[-] in the second part of the inscription, perhaps referring to σπουδαῖος, a term associated with the aristocratic sphere, and preferred by Aristotle when referring to the ‘noble’.⁶³

In any event, Kaibel already affirmed – against earlier opinions – that *rusticorum autem hominum carmen uix est*, and he based that suspicion on the epitaph’s possible allusion to an elegy by Anacreon:

οὐ φιλέω, ὃς κρητῆρι παρὰ πλέωι οἰνοποτάζων
νείκεα καὶ πόλεμον δακρυόεντα λέγει,
ἀλλ' ὅστις Μουσέων τε καὶ ἀγλαὰ δῶρ' Ἀφροδίτης
συμμίσγων ἐρατῆς μνήσκεται εὐφροσύνης.

*I like not him, who, when he quaffs wine over a full bowl, talks of strifes and tearful war, but him
who mixes the glorious gifts of the Muses and Aphrodite and recalls the good times which he
loves.⁶⁴*

The Homeric expression *polemon dakryoenta* (πόλεμον δακρυόεντα), ‘tearful war’, is found in these lines, and was also seen in the Gnathios epitaph. It appears just this once in the corpus of metrical funerary inscriptions.

The few references to this epigram that I have found, most of them quite old, understand it as an erotic relationship situated around the Persian Wars: *haec enim scripsit belli Persarum fere aetate homo quidam Atheniensis in memoriam iuuenis amati*, ‘this was written, more or less around the time of the Persian Wars, by an Athenian man in memory of his young beloved’.⁶⁵ Logically, we are to suppose that it was the *eromenos* who raised this memorial.⁶⁶

Wives and Their Masters

In the classic study by Émile Benveniste on the vocabulary of Indo-European institutions, he notes that no term can be reconstructed in that language for ‘husband’. In Greek, lacking a specific name, other terms are used: *posis* (πόσις), ‘master’, or the generic *aner* (άνήρ), ‘man’. Husbands will appear as both of these terms in the metrical funerary epitaphs, and we will also see how husbands are remembered as such, not in their own memorials, but in their wives’. Surely it is no coincidence that this lack of precise terminology coexists with considerable indifference toward the condition of ‘husband’ as something worth mentioning about the deceased. Thus, in epitaphs of the fourth century BC, the woman is usually honoured as a wife, while allusions to the family sphere are much less common for men; only on three occasions do we find an explicit mention of the status of husband.¹

Prior to this, in the fifth century BC, women generally are the subject of very few epitaphs, and only one of these – from the island of Chios – is a husband’s dedication to his *parakoitis* (παράκοιτις), ‘bed mate’:

ἐσλῆ[ς] τ ὁ (sic) γυναικὸς ὁδὸν π[ά]ρα τήνδε τὸ σ[ῆ]μα
 λεωφόρον Ἀσπασίης ἐσ[τ]ι καταπιμ[έν]ης·
 ὁργῆς δ’ ἀ[ντ’] ἀγαθῆς Εὐω[πί]δης τόδε μν[ῆ]μα
 αὐτῇ ἐπέσ[τη]σεν, τ ὁ παράκοιτις ἔην.²

*This tomb to a noble woman, beside the road
 well-travelled, is of dead Aspasia.
 Because of her good nature, Euopides raised this memorial
 for her who was his wife.*

In these distichs we observe the insistence on the stele placed ‘beside the road’, an aspect we have already discussed, having to do with the elite’s desire to give visibility to their dead. Also interesting is the unusual case where the terms *sema* (σῆμα) and *mnema* (μνῆμα) appear in the same epigram; though the difference between them is often minimized, here it is clearly identifiable: the former refers to the physical monument itself and its location; the latter speaks of the remembrance, of fame associated with the deceased’s noble condition.

In the pages that follow I comment on some of the funerary epigrams of husbands and wives; to begin, we devote some special attention to the epitaph of Melite.

Another one came from the bee ... fortunate is he

who has one of these!

As noted in the introductory chapters, the Attic funerary stelai of the Classical age constitute a well-known and thoroughly examined corpus, presenting typified images that indicate age and family relations through certain attributes and gestures that are repeated from one stele to another. Still, despite the repetitions, the apparent simplicity of the images and how readily one can empathize with them, leading expert K. Friis Johansen encourages us to look more closely at the stelai and notice the many unanswered questions.³ To begin with, one aspect seems quite strange from our perspective: in stelai that represent couples or groups, we cannot always tell who the deceased person is. If the stele has an epigram, it will enlighten us, but if not, as in so many cases, we are left to wonder. If we see the image of a youth and an old man, both of them having a grieved expression, is the youth the one who has died, hence his melancholy expression and bowed head? Or is he saddened at the death of his father, who also looks dejected in the image? And in the scenes of woman and maiden, often recreated in the style of the votive reliefs of Demeter and Persephone, is it the maiden who has died, as the mythical allusion would suggest? Or does the young woman mourn the death of her mother?

The stele we are about to address seems at first to lack any originality. In other words, it is extremely conventional: a husband and wife, the woman seated on the left of the image and the husband standing at her side. The epitaph remains, informing us that the wife has died, and speaking of the love that husband and wife professed. In the only study dedicated to possible correlations between epigram and image, Clairmont reviews nearly one hundred funerary monuments of the Archaic and Classical periods, and, referring to this stele, notes that hardly any connection exists between this particular image, quite conventional, and the text.⁴ He reaches the same conclusion in the majority of cases, not surprisingly if we consider that sculptors offered the public rather standardized images. Except for a few cases, they reproduced neither the particular features of the deceased nor the circumstances of his or her death. Nonetheless, while acknowledging the conventional nature of the image, I believe that in this specific case epitaph and image reinforce each other, carrying the idealization of marriage to an extreme.

Melite's stele was found in Piraeus and is dated c. 365–340 BC. The epitaph is composed of two hexameters (with one particularity that I mention below) and two catalectic trochaic tetrameters:

χαῖρε τάφος Μελίτης χρηστῇ γυνὴ ἐνθάδε κεῖται·
φιλοῦντα| ἀντιφιλοῦσα τὸν ἄνδρα Ὀνήσιμον ἦσθα κρατίστη·
τοιγαροῦν ποθεῖ| θανοῦσάν σε, ἦσθα γάρ χρηστὴ γυνή. |
καὶ σὺ χαῖρε φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ἀλλὰ | τοὺς ἐμοὺς φίλει.⁵

Hail, grave of Melite: Here lies a diligent wife.

Loving to your husband Onesimus and beloved of him you were the best,
for this reason he still longs for you, for you were a diligent wife.
Hail to you as well, the best of men, and take care of my dear ones.

This epigram has been studied fundamentally along two lines: in substance, because of its value as evidence of reciprocity in marital love;⁶ in form, because of the peculiar play of dialogue, taking in turn the voice of the passer-by (or more likely, of the husband) and, in the last verse, of the deceased wife herself.⁷ My own commentary takes a more literary than formal approach.

The first verse opens and closes in conventional fashion, with the formulas χαῖρε τάφος Μελίτης (passer-by greets the memorial) and ἐνθάδε κεῖται ('here lies'), but in between, the adjective *chreste* (χρηστή) applied to Melite, though not unusual in the epitaphs of both men and women, takes on special importance in this context, as we shall soon see. The second verse presents several peculiarities. First, *philounta* (φιλοῦντα), at the beginning of the verse, is metrically superfluous,⁸ although for the sake of meaning it is required by *antiphilousa* (ἀντιφιλοῦσα): 'loving and beloved'.⁹ Taking the expression as a whole, *philounta antiphilousa*, the editors point out the following *loci similes*: Plato, *Lysis* 212c–d and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1155b28, 1157b30, 1159a30, *Eudemian Ethics* 1236b2.¹⁰ Beginning with the latter, by Aristotle, we find that nearly all the references are found in Book 8 of *Nicomachean Ethics*, which deals with friendship: ἐπὶ μὲν τῇ τῶν ἀψύχων φιλήσει οὐ λέγεται φιλία· οὐ γάρ ἔστιν ἀντιφίλησις, 'fondness for inanimate things is not called friendship, because there is no reciprocity'; ἀντιφιλοῦσι δὲ μετὰ προαιρέσεως, 'reciprocal friendship implies choice'; ἀντιφιλεῖσθαι δ' οὐ ζητοῦσιν, 'they are not seeking to be loved in return' (speaking of the love of mothers for their children). In the passage from *Eudemian Ethics*, he defines ἀντιφιλία, or reciprocal friendship, as being characteristic of noble men. If we turn to Plato, we find a similar context: *Lysis* discusses the topic of friendship, what it means to be a friend, and in this framework we again find the concept of ἀντιφιλία, love that receives love in return.

While it is true that the passages cited here speak of *antiphilesis* (ἀντιφίλησις), of reciprocity in friendship or love, two objections might be made to considering them possible influences in the present epitaph. The first objection, that none of these refer to marital love (more than obvious in Plato); the second, it seems quite unlikely that these texts would have been so familiar as to be reflected in a fourth-century BC epitaph. In any case, their influence seems to me much less likely than that of another passage which has been almost entirely overlooked in the criticism, and which meets the criteria that these two philosophical passages do not – referring to love in marriage and having gained unquestionable popularity: Semonides' famous iamb against women, precisely in the verses where he speaks of the bee woman, Fr. 7.86.¹¹ In this poem, although it is known to us as the iamb against women, in fact he is speaking of wives,¹² and the *bee-wife* is the only

one who can bring good fortune to him who finds her:

τὴν δὲκ μελίσσης τὴν τις εὐτυχεῖ λαβών

Another one came from the bee ... fortunate is he who has one!

and the iambist characterizes her in the following manner:

φίλη δὲ σὺν φιλέοντι γηράσκει πόσει
τεκοῦσα καλὸν κώνομάκλυτον γένος.

*a loving wife, she grows old with her loving husband
producing handsome and illustrious offspring.*

These two notes summarize the virtue of the bee-wife and how she is different from the rest of the women who make up Semonides' bestiary: she loves and is loved by her husband and has borne a handsome lineage of children. The epitaph under study here picks up the two characteristics: φιλοῦντα ἀντιφιλοῦσα τὸν ἄνδρα, in v. 2, 'loving to your husband Onesimus and beloved of him', and in the last verse, in the mouth of Melite herself, a plea to her husband, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἐμοὺς φίλει, 'take care of my dear ones', quite probably referring to their children.

If we also take into account the similarity between the name of the deceased, *Melite* (Μελίτη), and the word for bee, *melissa* (μέλισσα), it is hard to escape an evocation of Semonides.¹³

We may now return to that first verse, which actually says it all: χαῖρε τάφος Μελίτης χρηστὴ γυνὴ ἐνθάδε κεῖται. As hinted above, the adjective *chreste* takes on special importance here and is key to understanding the poem, since it is the qualifier given to the best of the bees, the *chreste melissa* (χρηστὴ μέλισσα), that industrious worker that we know well from Aristotle's *History of Animals*, especially 624a-b. Melite is the perfect bee-wife, who does not use up her home, but increases it through her work.¹⁴ A loving wife, loved by her husband and the mother of children, she appears on the stele next to her husband, in her well-cared-for home – not, as the poet from Amorgos describes, next to other women telling each other ἀφροδισίους λόγους, 'love stories'.¹⁵

We now leave the epigram, which after a closer reading is much less conventional than it first seemed, and turn to the image. Our intent is not to question the idea that Attic funerary stelai give little room for singularities, and that age, gender and social condition are represented in codified fashion. Numerous scholars generally agree on another equally important consideration, namely, that Attic funerary stelai art commemorates in the *retrospective* sense, that is, it does not anticipate the future with allusions to a promise of life after death, but articulates present social ideals and represents a certain ideology.¹⁶ Although this idea is not fully applicable to the Archaic age, where we have already seen that images tend to also have

prospective functions, including symbols such as the pomegranate and certain flowers related to the chthonic powers, we do find it to be particularly applicable to funerary monuments of the Classical period.

Taking these assumptions as our starting point, it is easy to see that the stele that represents Melite and her husband Onesimus makes use of all the gestures that codify the more desirable aspects of matrimony, and perfectly complements the epigram inscribed there.

The wife is seated on the left. We identify her as the deceased only because of the epigram that accompanies the image, as noted above; scholars no longer consider the seated position to be assigned exclusively to the person to whom the stele is dedicated, at least for the Classical period. What we do find is a clear preference of sculptors to present the woman in this position, regardless of her role in the scene. The emblematic image of femininity, this posture becomes the most evident iconographic translation for marriage.¹⁷

Melite wears a *chiton* (χιτών) and *himation* (ἱμάτιον), the latter garment raised slightly in her left hand in a gesture that evokes the ritual of the *anakalypteria* (ἀνακαλυπτῆρια), the unveiling of the bride, and underscores the importance of the veil in the transformation of maiden to wife. This motif also appears frequently outside the nuptial context,¹⁸ suggesting acceptance,¹⁹ being found not only in representations of brides, but also as a gesture of the married woman toward her husband, in short, as an indication of social status.²⁰

Finally, Melite and her husband take each other's right hand in a new codified gesture, *dexiosis*. This joining of the hands also has a long interpretive history and has been thought of especially as a kind of salute, either a farewell that takes place in this world, or a reencounter that is projected into the hereafter, but this hypothesis seems finally to have been discarded in favour of the idea that it emphasizes close unity between the individuals represented. In fact, *dexiosis* is particularly associated with scenes that represent family groups.

The image on this stele, though conventional, makes use of all the gestures that stand for the perfect matrimonial union in iconographic language: the wife is represented seated, taking her *himation* in hand; the husband appears by her side, and grasps her other hand. On some occasions, one of these gestures alone is the key to understanding a stele where there is no epigram; here all three gestures reinforce the message of the verses, which in addition to the echoes of Semonides, adopt the form of a dialogue between husband and wife, emphasizing the unity between them even more.

Tribute to wives, in spite of Pericles

After examining the exceptional example of Melite's stele and epigram, let us now review some other evidence from the same period, in all cases but

the last, from Attica. To begin, let us note that on the fourth-century BC stelai dedicated to married women, aside from their customary reference to husband and children, we also find praise that these wives have gained for themselves among men – in clear transgression of Pericles' oft-touted recommendation.

The words that Thucydides placed in the statesman's mouth in his famous funerary speech of the first year of the Peloponnesian War (431–430 BC) seem long forgotten. At the end of this speech, Pericles reminds the widows: εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς, ὅσαι νῦν ἐν χρηεῖα ἔσονται, μνησθῆναι, βραχεῖα παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ. τῆς τε γὰρ ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χεῖροσι γενέσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἢ δόξα καὶ ἥς ἂν ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾗ ('If I may speak also of the duty of those wives who will now be widows, a brief exhortation will say it all. Your great virtue is to show no more weakness than is inherent in your nature, and to cause least talk among males for either praise or blame').²¹ However, the epitaphs of the fourth century BC do assert this fame, as we shall see, and as much as the genre allows, they elaborate on the praise of these women's virtue.

Our first example, composed of a single elegiac distich, is noted for its explicit reference to immortal fame, *kleos athanaton* (κλέος ἀθάνατον). Aristokrateia is lauded with an epic expression, though it is applied to an unepic virtue, *sophrosyne*. The family members mentioned are husband and mother; in the absence of any mention of children, we may imagine a young woman who died shortly after marriage:

[ῥ]δ' ἔθανεν προλιπὼσα πόσιν καὶ μητ[έρα κεδνὴν] |
[κ]αὶ κλέος ἀθάνατον σωφροσύνης [μεγάλης]. |
Ἀριστοκράτεια Κορινθία. ννν(ν) Θεόφ[ιλος].²²

*This woman died leaving behind a husband and beloved mother
and immortal fame for her great good judgement.
Aristokrateia of Corinth. —*

The following epigram speaks of praise that the deceased has attained, largely among men. A kind of praise and tribute, yes, that is characteristic of women (ἔπαινος ... γυναικῶν); but if Pericles wanted the virtue of women (γυναικείας ἀρετῆς) to be spoken of as little as possible among men (ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι), even shortening his own admonition (βραχεῖα παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ), Chairippe's memorial explicitly refers to the high tribute that she attained among men. The protagonist of this epitaph even speaks herself in the final verse, proudly affirming that she has left her children the remembrance of her nobility:

(i) Χαίριππη.
(ii) ὅστις ἔπαινος ἄριστος ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν γυναικῶν, |
Χαίριππη τούτο πλεῖστον ἔχουσ' ἔθανεν· |
μνημεῖον δὲ ἀρετῆς παισὶν ἐμοῖς ἔλιπο· οὐν.²³

- (i) *Chairippe.*
- (ii) *The best praise for women among men,²⁴*
Chairippe died having attained it in the utmost:
I have left my children the remembrance of my excellence.

The following epitaph speaks of a woman named Mnesarete, who owes her fame to the well-preserved, quite splendid stele. Mnesarete appears seated, accompanied by another woman standing, thought by some to be a servant, by others to be her sister. The epigram ends with a literary image of the Persephone's chamber which receives those who reach Hades:

- (i) Μνησαρέτη Σωκράτος.
- (ii) ἥδη πόσιν τ' ἔλιπεν καὶ ἀδελφὸς μητρί τε πένθος
καὶ τέκνον μεγάλης τε ἀρετῆς εὐκλεαν ἀγήρω.
- (iii) ἐνθάδε τῇμ πάσης ἀρετῆς ἐπὶ τέρ[μα μολὼ]σαν
Μνησαρέτην κατέχε Φερσεφόνης θάλαμος.²⁵

- (i) *Mnesarete of Socrates.*
- (ii) *This woman left behind husband and siblings and sorrow to her mother,*
a son and imperishable fame of her great excellence.
- (iii) *Here, having reached the end of all excellence,*
Mnesarete is welcomed to the Persephone's chamber.

This epitaph is formed by two hexameters and an elegiac distich. Despite its relative length, it says little about Mnesarete; in fact it asserts the same thing in two ways, and therefore has been considered one of the oldest examples of 'art of variation': the *arete* of Mnesarete is the object of the epigram and acts as a nexus that joins two pairs of verses not connected by any other narrative element.²⁶ However, a closer look reveals at least two elements worth mentioning; on one hand, another case of attaining great fame (not qualified this time as 'immortal', but 'which does not grow old': μεγάλης τε ἀρετῆς εὐκλεαν ἀγήρω);²⁷ on the other hand, the reference to the Persephone's chamber, a divinity who becomes increasingly present in this period and practically replaces Hades in epitaphs of the fourth century BC.

Now turning to the memorial of Myrtis, the surviving stele represents the deceased woman standing; next to her, their hands united in the gesture of *dexiosis*, her mother Hierokleia. The relationship between mother and daughter is the iconographic subject of the stele, and is furthermore reflected in the first verse, which highlights Myrtis's maternal filiation (Ἱεροκλείας θυγάτηρ). The distich that forms the epitaph mentions the two women and Myrtis's husband:

- (i) Μυρτίς Ἱεροκλείας θυγάτηρ Μόσχου | γυνὴ ἐνθάδε κεῖται,
πλεῖστα τρόποις | ἀρέσασα ἀνδρὶ τε τοῖς τε ἔτεκε
- (ii) Ἱερόκλεια. Μυρτίς.²⁸

- (i) *Myrtis, daughter of Hierokleia, wife of Moschos, lies here,*

she who by her character pleased exceedingly her husband and children.

(ii) Hierokleia. Myrtis.

We continue with an epigram dedicated to a young newlywed:²⁹

[οἶκον ?ἔδωχ'Υ] ¹Ἥμενοις, ἐν ᾧ ποτε Παμφίλῃ ἦδε
ζῆλον ἔχοσ'ὥικει τὸν μακαριστότατον·
[πρὶν ?δ'ἔτε?] ²τελέσαι ³[ί]ο] εἴκοσ[ιν] ὀρφανίσασα
νυμφιδίος οἶκος ἡλικίας ἔθανεν.³⁰

*Hymenaios gave her a home, where Pamphile, who now lies here,
lived then in an enviable state of great happiness.
But she died before the age of twenty, leaving orphaned
the nuptial home of her youth.*

In contrast to the epitaphs of married women, where the husband, *posis* (πόσις), is usually mentioned, here we find reference to the home of the bridegroom, *nymphidios oikos* (νυμφιδίος οἶκος), the girl's new home. Maidens who die before marriage abandon the home of their father; in this case, the young woman has left the bridegroom's home an orphan. This is the same idea, the condition of being newly wed, that is being highlighted with the appearance of Hymenaios in the very first verse. This epitaph makes no attempt to praise the young wife, but its theme is the newlywed's early death.

The following epitaph, composed of a single distich, offers minimal information about the deceased woman:

ἐνθάδε τὴν ἀγαθὴν καὶ σώφρονα γαῖ' ἐκάλυψε|
Ἀρχεστράτην ἀνδρὶ ποθεινοτάτῃν.³¹

*Here the earth covers noble and judicious
Archestrate, much longed for by her husband.*

The stele survives, and if we accept it as a source of more information about Archestrate, we would say that she left behind a young child, who appears between her and another woman who offers her a small box. It is true that the child is not named in the epitaph, while the husband who is named does not appear on the stele. However, we need not consider this to be of great significance. What is clear is that Archestrate is remembered and her absence is keenly felt, precisely because of her central role in the idealistic homely scene that the stele recreates.³²

In the case of the Peisikrateia memorial, the stele also survives and shows her seated, on the left. She is accompanied by two men, both standing, both of them bearded:

(i) Πεισικράτεια Εὐφρονίου | [Λ]αμπρεῖως. Εὐφρόνιος.
(ii) Πεισικράτεια ἥδεσσι Εὐφρονίῳ θυγά|τηρ,
ἥς ψυχὴν μὲν ἔχει τὸ χρέων γ', ἢ | [τ]οῖς δὲ τέκνοισι

τὴν ἀρετὴν ἀσχεῖν | σωφροσύνην τε ἔλιπεν.

(iii) Ἀριστόδικος.³³

(i) *Peisikrateia, daughter of Euphronios of Lamptrai.*³⁴ *Euphronios.*

(ii) *This is Peisikrateia, daughter of Euphronios.*

Fate possesses her soul; to her children

she has left excellence and good judgment so that they might practice it.

(iii) *Aristodikos.*

As for interpretation of the stele, the older man who appears on the left, leaning on a staff and taking Peisikrateia's hand, would convincingly represent her father. The man who appears in the centre perhaps should be identified as Aristodikos (husband? brother?).

I now examine a longer epitaph, dedicated to Archestrata, where we find one of the few references to *eusebeia* (εὐσέβεια), 'piety', in the corpus used for this study:

(i) πλεῖστον μὲν καὶ ζῶσα [τ]ρό | πων σὼν ἔσχες ἔπαινον, |

Λυσάνδρου Πιθέως | Ἀρχεστράτῃ ἔγγονε, καὶ νῦ[ν] |

[λ]εῖπεις σοῖσι φίλοισι μέγαν πόθον, | ἔξοχα δ' αὐτῇς

ἀνδρί, λιποῦσα φάος | μοιριδίῳ θανάτῳ.

(ii) εὐσεβῇ ἀσκήσασα βίον | καὶ σώφρονα θνήσκω

ἡνίκα | μοι βιότου μόρσιμον ἦλθε τέλος.

(iii) πένθος μητρὶ λιποῦσα κασιγνή|τῳ τε πόσει τε

παιδί τ' ἐμῷ | θνήσκω καὶ με χθὼν ἦδε καλύ|πτει

ἡ πᾶσιν κοινὴ τοῖς ἀπογιγνο|μένοις

εἰμὶ δὲ Λυσάνδρου | Πιθέως Ἀρχεστράτῃ ἦδε.³⁵

(i) *When living, you obtained highest praise for your character,*

*Archestrata, daughter of Lysander of Pithos;*³⁶ *now,*

you leave your loved ones with a painful yearning, especially

your husband, after forsaking the light for fatal death.

(ii) *I die having led a pious and judicious life*

when overtaken by the time fixed for my life to end.

(iii) *Leaving grief to my mother, brother, husband*

and child, I die and am covered by this earth,

common to all who perish.

I am Archestrata, daughter of Lysander of Pithos.

As I indicated, the mention of *eusebeia* (εὐσέβεια) is far from common in funerary epigraphy. Prior to this example, it is possibly found in an epitaph from the late fifth century BC,³⁷ also of a woman, but we must take this with some reservation, given that the text is reconstructed, and precisely in the part that affects the term *eusebeia*. Both the reconstructed text proposed by Peek and the commentary on the image, found in Clairmont and based on that reconstruction, are untenable. In fact, the Hansen publication that I always take as my basis accepts none of the proposed reconstructions (*de supplementis tacere malim*, says the editor).³⁸

Returning to the epitaph of Archestrata, here the reference to a pious life is established without any doubt: εὐσεβῇ ... βίον. While it is true that since

the time of Homer's poems we find the Greeks behaving piously in relation to their gods, we should keep in mind that this attitude is not designated by the term *eusebeia*, either in Homer, in Hesiod, or in the first lyric poems.³⁹ Theognis was the first poet to use the term.⁴⁰ With Pindar, and the turning of the fifth century BC, *eusebeia* (both as respect for the gods and for one's parents) and its derivatives have already become part of the Greek language.⁴¹ This is evidenced in another epitaph dedicated to a woman, where a reference to the daughter's piety is found:

Κερκώπη μὲν ἔγωγ' ἐκαλούμην, | εἰμὶ δὲ πατρός
 Σ[ω]κράτου Ἡδύτιον | Μαραθωνίου, εὖθ[α]νάτως δὲ
 στείχω | ζηλωτὴ Φερσεφόνης θάλαμον, |
 γήραι ἀριθμ[ή]σας' ἐννέα ἔτων | δεκάδ' ας.
 εὖσεβίαι θυγατρὸς δὲ | ἐτάφην ὥσπερ με προσήκει.⁴²

*I was called Cicada, but I am Hedytion, daughter
 of Socrates of Marathon, and having died well,
 envied I make my way to the Persephone's chamber,
 after counting in my old age nine decades.
 Because of the piety of my daughter, I was given the burial that was due me.*

In this case, it is a woman whose behaviour towards her mother fulfills the demands of *eusebeia* and a record of this is left on her memorial.

Another aspect that has attracted attention in this marble lekythos inscription is the nickname of the deceased, *Cercope* (Κερκώπη), one of the names for cicada. Some authors do not take it in its mythical sense, associated with the longevity of cicadas and hence Hedytion's ninety years; instead they feel it emphasizes that very *female* characteristic of talkativeness.⁴³ Nonetheless, I do not feel that Hedytion's long life, the explicit motif of the epitaph, can be totally discarded as an explication for this nickname. In any case, it is the mention of *eusebeia* that interests me, this time of a daughter toward her mother, whose funeral she has aptly orchestrated, and also the reappearance of the image 'Persephone's chamber', to which I will return later.

We continue with another epitaph, this time in hexameters, dedicated to a young married woman; the stele is also preserved. An express indication of age is quite infrequent, and just as we saw when Pamphile's age was mentioned above, the primary motif of this epitaph is lamentation for the death of a young wife:

(i) Φίλαγρος Ἀγγελῆθεν. Ἡγίλλα Φιλάγρο.
 (ii) ἡλικία μὲν ἐμὴν ταύτην δεῖ πάντας ἀκοῦσαι·
 εἴκοστῳ καὶ πέμπτῳ ἔτει λίπον ἡλίου αὐγὰς. |
 τοὺς δὲ τρόπους καὶ σωφροσύνην ἣν εἶχομεν ἡμεῖς
 ἡμέτερος πόσις οἶδεν ἄριστ' εἰπεῖν περὶ τούτων.⁴⁴

*Philagros of Angele. Hegilla daughter of Philagros.
 Let everyone hear how old I was:*

at age twenty-five I abandoned the light of the sun.
As for my nature and the good judgment that I had,
my husband is better able to report on that.

In the final Attic epigram that I am going to consider, the one dedicated to Nikoptoleme, we re-encounter several of the motifs already seen: the allusion to Persephone; the explicit mention, not of immortal fame, but of immortal remembrance, *mnemen athanaton* (μνήμην ἀθάνατον) and the allusion to the piety of the deceased. Several names appear *extra metrum*, I reproduce only the epigram:

σῆς ἀρετῆς, Νικοπτολέμη, χρόνος οὔποτε λ[ύ]σει|
μνήμην ἀθάνατον, σῶι πόσει ἦν ἔλιπες|
εἰ δέ τις εὐσεβίας παρὰ Φερσεφόνει χάρις ἐστίν, |
καὶ σοὶ τῆσδε μέρος δῶκε Τύχη φθιμένῃ.⁴⁵

*Of your excellence, Nikoptoleme, time shall not destroy
its immortal remembrance, which you have left to your husband.
And if any recognition of piety exists next to Persephone,
to you too, dead, Fortune has granted some share.*

I have already mentioned the fact that the presence of Persephone becomes prevalent in the epitaphs of this period; we have also noted that expressions linked to this ‘Persephone’s chamber’ would serve the Orphic and Dionysiac followers as a channel for their beliefs on the immortality of the soul.⁴⁶ In this specific case, however, the most that is suggested is reciprocity in human and divine relations: if piety has any recompense, Fortune will give Nikoptoleme her share.⁴⁷ The information offered by the epitaph does not allow us to further specify the beliefs of the deceased; we can only note the simultaneous appearance of the term *eusebeia*, the mention of Persephone and hopes of a future reward. Perhaps this vagueness is also significant and can be read as pointing to non-mainstream beliefs.

Also interesting is an epitaph from Rhodes, inscribed on a well-preserved stele that represents the deceased next to another woman who might be a family member or a slave. The first verse is very similar to one discussed earlier, from the memorial to Chairippe, and it insists again on the praise that a woman can attain among men:

ὅστις ἄριστος ἔπαινος ἐν ἀνθρώποισι γυναικός,
Καλλιαρίστα Φιληράτο τοῦτον ἔχουσα ἔθανεν,
σωφροσύνας ἀρετᾶ[ς] | τε ἀλόχῳ πόσις ὄνευκα τόνδε
Δαμοκλῆς {ε}στᾶσεν, μνημόσυνον φιλίας·
ἀνθ’ ὧν οἱ δαίμων ἐσθλὸς ἔποιτο βίῳ.⁴⁸

*The best tribute that a woman may receive among men,
Kalliarista, daughter of Phileratos, has attained it before dying,
because of her good judgement and excellence. For this her husband Damokles
for his wife raised this monument of his love:
in exchange, may a favourable destiny⁴⁹ accompany him in his life.*

In this epitaph, the mention of reciprocity and reward is more complex than in previous cases: Kalliarista is remembered with a memorial for her good judgement and excellence, and the husband, for his part, asserts his prayer from this same memorial that destiny will smile on him in reward for having raised the monument to his wife.

Quite universally, from the briefest to the most extended of these epitaphs, they all focus on the sphere of family relations, and leave us in nearly total ignorance about any specific detail of these women's lives – in contrast to what we shall soon see with the men. Even so, I note certain aspects of interest, such as Pericles' recommendation about the glory of women, now forgotten in the fourth century BC, and above all the celebration of *eusebeia*, understood both as respect for the gods and for one's parents, seeming to be quite especially associated with the behavior of women. This idea is confirmed with two more examples, an epitaph from Attica, dedicated to a man and wife, and a brief distich found in Kamarina, whose subject is a young woman. The first, dedicated to a foreign *isotelesso* and his wife, both of them well advanced in years, is a double epitaph whose final verses read thus:

[...] καὶ ἐγὼ τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἔφυν καὶ πάντα ὁμοίᾱ |
γῆραι καὶ φροντίδι εὐσεβίας ἔνεκα.⁵¹

[...] and I was equal in every way to the old age and good sense
of this man, thanks to piety.

Although it may be supposed that piety was practised by both of them, equal in all things as the epigram says, it is the wife precisely who says that *eusebeias heneka* (εὐσεβίας ἔνεκα), 'thanks to piety', she was able to be equal to her husband in age and in good judgement.⁵² We must also consider that although there is a single funerary monument for the couple, there is a clear separation between their respective epitaphs, allowing us to consider them somewhat independent: the four hexameters dedicated to the husband and the distich of the wife, translated above, are separated by a painting.

The distich found in Kamarina, as we said, is dedicated to a young woman:

σωφρ[ο]σύνην τιμῶσα | δικαιοσύνην τε σέβου[σ]α |
[Ἴ]ππῳ ἐν ἡλικίᾳ πνεῦμ' ἔ[λ]ιπεν βίουτου.⁵³

Although she highly valued good judgement, and honoured justice,
Hippo gave up her life's breath in her youth.

This epigram is particularly interesting because of the explicit association between *eusebeia* and *dikaiosyne*. In the epigraph corpus edited by Hansen, the first appearance of *dikaiosyne* as part of epigraphic praise is found in the memorial of a copper-smelter (χαλκόπτης), a man from Gortyna, to whom his children dedicated a stele: μνημα δικαιοσύνης καὶ σωφροσύνης ἀρετῆς τε, 'a memorial of justice, good judgement and excellence' (fifth century BC).⁵⁴

In the fourth century BC some examples are found, but few. In some cases the term appears alone,⁵⁵ in others it is combined with *arete*⁵⁶ or with *arete* and *sophrosyne*.⁵⁷ The epitaph of young Hippo is the first where we find an association between the verb *sebo* (σέβω) and *dikaïosyne*.

In closing our discussion of tribute to women, it is true that in some instances one perceives a certain reluctance, or conditionality, in offering such praise, but this is by no means universal, as we have seen. Nicole Loraux, in an attempt to find similarities and differences between tragic discourse on the glory of women, and the more traditional discourse represented by the epitaphs, accurately noted certain reservations about the praise of women in three epitaphs.⁵⁸ One is dedicated to Chairippe, and I discussed it at the beginning of this section; the other two have not yet been discussed here. Let us have a look, then, at these two cases; the first is from Amorgos:

[εἴ]περ ἐν ἀνθρώποισι γυναικῶν ἔστ' ἀρετὴ τις, |
[ῥ]ᾷδε ἔλαχεν γνώμης δικαίης μέρος οὐκ ἐλά[χι]στον·
δόξα δ' ἔπαινον ἔχει, σωφροσύνη | [δε] ἀρετὴν.⁵⁹

*If any female excellence exists among men,
this woman attained no small share because of her just understanding:
good sense results in tribute, and good judgement in excellence.*

The epitaph opens with a conditional,⁶⁰ but this formula does not express a hesitation, it is used to underline the truth: virtue in women does exist. In the following epitaph, at least a formal reluctance to the praise of women appears, once again in the opening line:

(i) Γλυκέρα Θουκλείδου

(ii) Ὅ σπάνις ἐστὶ γυναικί, ἐσθλὴν καὶ σώφρονα φῦναι |
τὴν αὐτὴν, δοκίμως τοῦδ' ἔτυχεν Γλυκέρα.⁶¹

Glykera, daughter of Thoukleides.

*What is rare for a woman, to be by nature noble and judicious
at the same time, this was attained by Glykera in notable degree.*

The epitaph highlights the rarity of nobility and good judgement coexisting in a woman, but this may be poetic recourse; we have seen the same expression, *spanis* (σπάνις), 'rarely', used above to speak of faithfulness in men.⁶² What is more important in this case is the tribute likening Glykera to the admired Alcestis of Euripides. This is how Pheres, the father of Admetus, addressed his son, after learning of the death of his young wife: ἦκω κακοῖσι σοῖσι συγκάμνων, τέκνον· / ἐσθλῆς γάρ, οὐδεὶς ἀντερεῖ, καὶ σώφρονος / γυναικὸς ἡμάρτηκας ('I come to your aid in your misfortune, son: for no one will deny that you have lost a noble and judicious woman').⁶³ From this we may understand that Thucydides' words delivered by Pericles still have some weight, but at the same time, people are finding ways to get around his

recommendation. We might even suggest that the conditional expressions that begin certain epitaphs (εἴπερ ἐν ἀνθρώποισι γυναικῶν ἔστ' ἀρετὴ τις ..., 'if among men there can be any nobility characteristic to women ...') represent a point of contention, a kind of dialectical response, to the words of Pericles: εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς [...] μνησθῆναι ..., 'if I must also make mention of the nobility of women ...'.⁶⁴

As for *eusebeia*, for the moment I only note its special connection to the sphere of women. In the final chapter, I propose an interpretation that looks further into the meaning of this 'piety' that implies a reciprocity between human behaviour and divine reward.

Tribute to their masters

As I have noted earlier, husbands are not usually commemorated as such in the funerary epigrams. One of the few examples is found in an interesting epitaph dedicated to Potamon of Thebes, a performer on the musical wind instrument *aulos*:

- (i) Ἑλλὰς μὲν πρωτεῖα τέχνης αὐλῶν ἀπένειμεν|
Θηβαίῳ Ποκτᾶμωνι, τάφος δὲ δέξατο σῶμα|
πατὴρ δὲ μνήμασιν Ὀλυνπίχου αὐξετῆπαινος, |
οἷον ἐτέκνωσεμ παῖδα σοφοῖς βάσανον.
(ii) Πατρόκλεια Ποτάμωνος γυνή.⁶⁵

- (i) *Hellas granted supremacy in the art of the aulos
to Potamon of Thebes; this grave holds his body.
His tribute increases with the remembrance of his father Olympichos,⁶⁶
who fathered such a son, a touchstone for the learned.*
(ii) *Patrokleia, wife of Potamon.*

The interest of this epitaph goes much further than the final mention of his wife; in fact, the memorial to Potamon has served to shed some light on another important figure in the history of Greek music: the *auletes* Pronomos.⁶⁷ Pronomos has not attracted much attention as an artist, since all the focus has gone to the famous Pronomos Vase, an essential pictorial reference for studying Greek theatre. This red figure vase shows several actors at a rehearsal break, and in the middle of them, an *auletes* who is usually identified as the famous Pronomos. The musician's lifetime is dated most probably to 470–c. 390 BC. According to Pausanias, a statue of Pronomos, also from Thebes, was erected in his city's acropolis.⁶⁸ Pausanias does not mention the inscription that accompanied the statue, but we find it recorded in the *Anthology of Planudes*. The similarity between the two texts is undeniable:⁶⁹

- Ἑλλὰς μὲν Θήβας νικᾶν προέκρινεν ἐν αὐλοῖς·
Θῆβαι δὲ Προνόμον, παῖδα τὸν Οἰνιάδου.

The mention of Hellas in the first line of Potamon's epitaph indicates that we are dealing with a Panhellenic victory, probably in the Pythia.⁷¹ I make very brief mention of the value of this information about the families of artists, the reference to a skill like playing the *aulos* being passed on from fathers to sons. In studying the inscription dedicated to Potamon, we are fortunate to have the surviving stele, which represents father (Olympichos, father of Potamon, is recorded as a disciple of Pindar⁷²) and son, each of them with their musical instrument in hand. Again we find the problem that I have spoken of on other occasions, the difficulty of identifying the deceased: in a scene where we see an older man seated, grasping the hand of a younger man who stands at his side, only the text of the epitaph reveals that they are father and son, and that the son is the one who has died, the one to whom the memorial is dedicated.

Regarding the wife, Patrokleia, her name appears at the end, apparently *extra metrum*. Considering her name to be inscribed later than the rest of the epitaph,⁷³ two interpretations have been made: that she was the one who, some time after the memorial had been erected, wished to establish herself as its dedicant, or, that her name was inscribed when Patrokleia herself died. In any case, the tribute to Potamon is based on professional merits, not family virtues, as can be seen in the content of the epitaph as well as in the stele image.

Let us look now at another intriguing epitaph: dedicated to a man named Telemachos, the epigram offers a dialogue between him and his mother, buried beside him:

- (i) Τηλέμαχος | Σποῦδοκράτος | Φλυεύς.
- (ii) ὦ τὸν αἰμνῆστου ἄρετᾶς παρὰ πᾶσι πολίταις|
κλεινὸν ἔπαινον ἔχοντ' ἄνδρα ποθεινότατον|
παισὶ φίλει τε γυναικί. – τάφο δ' ἐπὶ δεξιά, μήτερ, |
κεῖμαι σῆς φιλίας οὐκ ἀπολειπόμενος.
- (iii) Ἱερόκλεια | Ὀψιάδου | ἐξ Οἴου.⁷⁴

- (i) *Telemachos, son of Spoudokrates of Phlya.*
- (ii) *Oh, you who have earned a clear tribute among all citizens
because of your ever-remembered excellence, O man sorely missed
by your children and your beloved wife! 'I rest, mother, at the right
of your grave, not straying from your affection.'*
- (iii) *Hierokleia, daughter of Opsiades of Oion.*

The excellence of Telemachos is celebrated, to be remembered always, *aeimnestou* (ἀειμνήστου), not only by his family, but also by his fellow citizens. What is especially remarkable is that the verb *leipo* (λείπω) and its compounds, 'to abandon', so common in funerary epigraphy, are used here in the negative (φιλίας οὐκ ἀπολειπόμενος, 'without abandoning you,

without straying from your affection'), in order to construct an image of filial love and label a family plot.

Finally, the epitaph of Daiikrates exalts the deceased's sense of justice. His wife and children say goodbye without tears, since death came at its proper time:

- (i) Δαιικράτης | Δημοκράτους | Μιλητοπολίτης.
(ii) [π]ολλ[ο]ῖς ἀφ' ἧν δαίμων βίον ὥπασε προῖκ[α], |
παύροισιν δὲ ἔτυμογ κτῆμα δικαιοσύνην, |
ἧς μέρος οὐκ ἐλάχιστον ὄδε ζωῶσι μετασχ[ών] |
Δαιοκράτης (sic) κοινοῦ (sic) τέρμα ἐπέρησε βίου, |
οἰκεῖαις δὲ γ' χερσὶ τέκνων ἀλόχου τε ἀδ[ελφ]ο[ῦ] [κ]ρυ[π]τ[ῆ] |
[ε]ὐξυνέτου Μοίρας εἰς τὸ χρεῶν δ[ού]λο[ι] δοταί.⁷⁵

- (i) Daiikrates,⁷⁶ son of Demokrates, citizen of Miletus
(ii) To many men divinity has granted the gift of a life of riches,
but to few the real possession of justice;
After having taken part in no small share of this while with the living,
Daiokrates reached the end of life that is common to all;
in the intimate hands of his children and wife, without tears,
he surrenders to the necessity of a timely Moira.

The translation 'a timely Moira' is not literal, but I feel it captures the sense of the term *euxynetos* (εὐξύνετος). The idea of something that is *well understood*, applied to Hades, indicates here that death has arrived at its proper time, something that we also observe in the fact that the children take care of their father. This use is more clearly seen if we compare it to the epitaph of a child, from the same era, whose last verse says *θνῆσκω δυσξυνέτῳ δαίμονι χρῆσάμενος*,⁷⁷ which we might translate as 'I die the victim of an untimely daimon', a daimon that in this case 'is not well understood'.

As a final consideration, we can say that not only are there very few examples of an allusion to the wife of the deceased in his epitaph, but when this does occur, she by no means occupies a place of prominence. Of the three examples given, the first is an exceptional case, as we have seen, focused on praise of a well-known musician; in the second, wife and children share the verse and the pain, but the real protagonist is the mother of the deceased; finally, in the last epitaph, first priority is given to praise of the deceased's sense of justice, and afterward to the pious role of wife and children.

I have found no fifth-century BC epitaph that mentions the wife of the deceased, just as we saw that only one of the female epitaphs from that century, the one from Chios, makes mention of a husband. This would confirm the idea that only in the fourth century BC do extended family relations (beyond filiation) take on greater significance in the epitaphs.

It should also be stated, in order to keep our perspective free of distortion, that I have limited myself to epitaphs that make explicit mention of the

deceased's status as spouse, whether man or woman. There are also epitaphs of women that refer to their profession, for example, nurses and midwives; in all likelihood they were also wives, even though their memorial does not mention it. However, the preceding discussion was based on an explicit reference to the marital relationship: in short, I have wished to expose the relative importance, for men and women, of being married.

Powerful Enemies: Childbirth, the Sea

There is an unwritten rule, nearly always respected in the stelai and funerary epigrams, of not mentioning the cause of death. This fact was already noted by Nicole Loraux, when studying death in childbirth: 'Sur les reliefs funéraires des cimetières athéniens, le mort est, on le sait, représenté dans ce qui fut sa vie; aucune allusion n'est faite à la mort qui fut la sienne, à deux exceptions près: mort d'un soldat, mort d'une accouchée.'¹ In earlier pages, I have referred more than once to the death of a warrior, speaking of young men fallen in battle, such as Kroisos or Tetichos. Now I turn to the memorials of women who died in childbirth, and also to the funerary monuments of those lost at sea, as these constitute exceptions to the rule stated above. Not only are there Archaic epitaphs that mention this type of death, there is also iconographic representation on the stelai. This is the case of the splendid Democles stele which I speak of later.

To be precise, it is not the *moment* of death that is represented,² but rather the cause of death. Childbirth and the sea were terrible enemies in the everyday life of Greek men and women; over the course of their lives, women faced childbirth, and the sea endangered both men and women, though predominantly men. It is no coincidence that when Burkert speaks of votive offerings as an extremely common religious practice, a fundamental strategy for facing the future, he uses the specific example of 'the dangers of a sea voyage, the incalculable risks of birth and child rearing, and the recurrent sufferings of individual illness'.³ If the biggest danger for the dominant class was war, as Burkert indicates, the typical dangers faced by the average man and woman were others. The corpus of funerary inscriptions only confirms the data from this other corpus of votive offerings.

Although I do not deny the obvious association between death at war and death in childbirth, highlighted by Nicole Loraux and later authors,⁴ I wish to suggest another comparison, also marked by gender, this time between women's death in childbirth, and the death of men, almost exclusively, at sea. Like the other cases, death at sea constitutes a new exception to the rule against mentioning the causes of death in Attic stelai, whether in text or iconography.

The case of Sparta, according to Plutarch

The existence of epitaphs dedicated to women who died in childbirth is

inseparable from discussions concerning a passage in Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus*, worth mentioning here:

Lycurgus 27, 2: ἐπιγράψαι δὲ τοῦνομα θάψαντας οὐκ ἔξῃν τοῦ νεκροῦ, πλὴν ἀνδρὸς ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ γυναικὸς [τῶν] λεχοῦς ἀποθανόντων, *when they buried them, it was not allowed to inscribe the name of the deceased over the grave, except for those who had died in war, if it were a man, or in childbirth, if it were a woman.*

The trouble comes from the fact that this text, where Plutarch speaks of Spartan legislation, has been corrected in its most interesting point. The manuscripts offer the following reading: ἐπιγράψαι δὲ τοῦνομα θάψαντας οὐκ ἔξῃν τοῦ νεκροῦ, πλὴν ἀνδρὸς ἐν πολέμῳ καὶ γυναικὸς τῶν ἱερῶν ἀποθανόντων, 'when they buried them, it was not allowed to inscribe the name of the deceased over the grave, except for a man who had died in war, or if it were a woman, one of the *hierai*'.⁵ Why has the text been emended? The reading given by the manuscripts presented no grammatical problem, but the identity of the *hierai* was an enigma; even though publications throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century maintained the unmodified text, Ziegler introduced the new text in the 1926 Teubner edition, attributing the emendation to Latte. Since then the correction has been widely adopted, if not unanimously. While the earlier reading of the manuscripts did not present any grammatical problem, neither does this emendation, and it has the advantage of fitting with our expectations about Spartan society: 'c'est ainsi que des énigmes se remplissent de choses connues'.⁶

What information can epigraphy contribute on each of these readings? In support of the now prevailing interpretation, the one that corrects the Plutarchean text, four Lacedaemonian funerary inscriptions are offered, each dedicated to a woman who died in childbirth (λεχοῖ),⁷ in addition to a number of Laconian epitaphs referring to war dead (θανόντες ἐμ πολέμῳ).⁸ The question, then, is whether to accept this evidence to justify such a drastic intervention in a perfectly grammatical text, namely, to substitute ἱερῶν with λεχοῦς and reject τῶν,⁹ or whether, on the contrary, to consider that there may have been *hierai* in Laconia, and try to clarify what the meaning of this term was.

Richer, one of the scholars who rejects Latte's emendation, argues in favour of this option in his study on funerals in Sparta.¹⁰ In his opinion, the Chaironeian is telling us that in Sparta, a rule attributed to Lycurgus allowed for graves of the war dead and of women belonging to the class of the *hierai* to not be anonymous. What was the meaning of this term, *hierai*? It must certainly indicate a very lofty quality, since it allowed a woman to attain honour equal to that of a man who died in battle, but the author goes no further than to suggest that this status has more to do with the religious than with the political.

It is important to note that we also have epigraphic evidence in favour of

this alternative: there are inscriptions where the names of women are followed by *hiera* (ἱερά) or *hiara* (ἱαρά). This limited *dossier* is composed of five Lacedaemonian inscriptions¹¹ – not Spartan, admittedly – and nothing is said of these women except that they have died. However, the Messenian *dossier* is more illustrative, and includes an important text about the mysteries celebrated in the city of Andania.¹² While the authors admit that it is not possible to equate the Messenian and Lacedaemonian *hierai*, it seems unlikely that they were totally different from each other.¹³

One recent study that defends the manuscript reading takes one step further, posing the following question: if such a privilege (to inscribe the name of the deceased over the grave) was granted to men who had fallen in battle and to women who exercised a religious function, why is nothing said of the men who also exercised that function at the time of their death? *In fact*, men who acted as priests and who died in battle could attain greater honours than the hoplite, as is inferred from a passage by Herodotus regarding the battle of Plataea. Herodotus mentions that the Spartans fallen in Plataea were buried in three tumuli, one for the priests, another for the Lacedaemonians, and another for the helots. The problem, once again, is that this text has also been amended: Valckenaer, in 1700, replaced ‘priests’ (ἱεράς and ἱεῖες, in 9.85.1 and 9.85.2) with *eirenes* (ἱρένας and ἱρένες, respectively), the young Spartan hoplites over the age of twenty.¹⁴

For my part, I prefer the policy that if no problems appear in the text, but we do not understand it, what we should do is try to understand it, not modify it.¹⁵ In order to break the impasse regarding Plutarch’s text on the legislation of Lycurgus, perhaps we should ask other types of questions, for example, what is the context of the Laconian inscriptions where *hierai* are mentioned? The five inscriptions that speak of *hierai* appear in three places: *Geronthrae* (Γερώνθραι), *Teuthrone* (Τευθρώνη) and *Pyrrichos* (Πύρριχος):

Geronthrae inscriptions:

IG V 1, 1127: [— — — —][— —] ¹ ⁹ [— — —]ο / [— —]ης χαίρετω. / Ἀγεία χαῖρε
 ἱα[ρά]. / [— — χαῖ]ρε. / Ἀγεία χαῖρε. / Νικοδαμεία ἱα[ρά χαῖρε]. / [Καλλ] ¹ ⁹ σθένης ἱερός
 χαῖρε. / Α[— —] Βιόδαμος χαῖρε.

IG V 1, 1129: Σαλίσκα / ἱερά χαῖρ ⁹.

Three *hierai* (ἱεραί) and one *hieros* (ἱερός) are named. Geronthrae was known for its cult to Ares, from which women were excluded;¹⁶ but on the acropolis there was also a temple to Apollo, to whom these inscriptions would be related.¹⁷ Pausanias says nothing of Artemis, although this goddess is sometimes worshipped alongside Apollo. For example, an inscription c. third century BC refers to Apollo *Hyperteleates* along with *Agrotera Kypharissia* (Ἀγροτέρα Κυφαρισσία, IG V 1, 977), *Agrotera* being a well-known epithet of Artemis. Two inscriptions from the same Apollo *fanum* (sanctuary of Apollo Hyperteleates, Laconia) are preserved, one dedicated to a priestess (IG V 1,

1068 [— — Ἀφροδισίου ἱέρια Ἀπόλλ[ωνος Ὑπερτελεάτ—]) and another to a priest (IG V 1, 1016 Σωτηριῖ[ω]ν Λακε(δαίμονιος) ἱερεὺς Ἀπόλλωνος Ὑπερτελεάτου).

Teuthrone inscriptions:

IG V 1, 1221: Ἀριστονίκα ἱερά, χαῖρε. Φιλάρ[ιν — — —].

SEG 22.306: Πολυκράτια ἱαρά χαῖρε

Artemis *Issoria* was worshipped in Teuthrone, according to Pausanias.¹⁸ The goddess Artemis was invoked with the same epiclesis in Sparta in one of her sanctuaries that marks the borders of the civic territory.¹⁹ We must assume that these have to do with the same goddess and the same function.

Pyrrichos inscription:

IG V 1, 1283: Σοφιδοὶ / ἱαρά Σ[— —] {ἱαρασ[— —] [μένα]??}.

In Pyrrichos there was a temple to Artemis *Astrateia*, worshipped alongside Apollo *Amazonius*.²⁰ The goddess, associated with Apollo, is invoked in the place where ‘the Amazons ended their expedition’, hence the name, according to Pausanias.²¹

There are numerous locations of Artemis cult in Sparta, and generally in Laconia, twenty-five according to a recent study.²² The literary and archaeological evidence in most of these locations points to a celebration associated with rites of passage, either for boys or girls – certainly one of the most well-known aspects of Artemis cult. But in regard to our topic, we also find remarkable the places where the goddess is presented as a huntress and in a defensive role, though fewer in number. These locations concur largely with the places where inscriptions mentioning *hierai* (and *hieroi*) are found: the above-mentioned locations of cults of Artemis *Astrateia* (Ἀστρατεία) in Pyrrichos, Artemis *Issoria* (Ἰσσωρία) in Teuthrone, and Artemis *Agrotera Kypharissia* (Ἀγροτέρα Κυφαρισσία), east of the river Asopus, to which we must add Artemis Ἰσσωρία and Artemis Ἀγροτέρα in Sparta. In the light of this evidence, might we associate the inscriptions with places where Artemis was worshipped in the role of defending territory, either alone or alongside Apollo, and where men and women performed some kind of religious function for which they were called *hieroi* and *hierai*, as appears in the epitaphs?

It is only a hypothesis, but it would allow us to respect Plutarch’s text, in addition to confirming the fact that, in Spartan society, their priests enjoyed higher privileges than did priests in other cities.

In any case, regardless of the reading adopted for Plutarch’s report about the Spartans, I believe we can assert that special importance was given to death in childbirth, as will be demonstrated in the metric epitaphs we are about to consider.

Finding the darkness

The war–childbirth association that underlies Plutarch’s report in the *Life of Lysurgus*, with all the nuances that I have already mentioned, can be justified with other arguments. First we have the etymology, since *lochos* (λόχος) is both ‘childbirth’ and ‘ambush’ (later, also ‘armed combat’),²³ although much doubt has been cast on this etymological equality, with claims that they are simply homonyms.²⁴ However, a link between the two concepts is also upheld by other terms such as *ponos* (πόνος), a name for the efforts of the warriors, for the work of heroes, but also for the pain and effort of childbirth.²⁵ In defence of this interpretation, which may actually lean more towards its womanly usage, we can also cite the famous words of Medea:

[...] ὥς τρίς ἂν παρ’ ἄσπίδα
στήναι θέλοιμι ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ τεκεῖν ἅπαξ

*... I would rather take my stand behind the shield three times than give birth only once*²⁶

In the epigraphic corpus that forms the basis of this study, we find minimal evidence of epitaphs for women who died in childbirth: only two epigrams, both from the fourth century BC, neither of them accompanied by an image. The *dossier* could be expanded somewhat if we also included the stelai that represent this motif, but for which we have no epitaph.²⁷

The first piece of evidence is a marble stele with an inscription in elegiac distichs:

παῖδά τοι ἰφθίμαν Δαμαινέτου ἄδε Κρατίσταν, |
Ἀρχεμάχου δὲ φίλαν εὖνιν ἔδεκτο κόνις, |
ἃ ποθ’ ὑπὸ δίνων στονόεντι κατέφθιτο πότμωι, |
ὀρφανὸν ἐμ μεγάροις παῖδα λιποῦσα πόσει.1.28

*The truly courageous daughter of Damainetos, Kratista,
beloved wife of Archemachos, has been received by this very dust,
She who one day perished in fateful throes of childbirth,
leaving an orphan son at home to her husband.*

Despite being found in the Kerameikos, the epitaph of this stele is written in literary Doric, an intriguing fact that scholars have tried to explain with more or less ingenuity. Nicole Loraux suggests that the deceased is thus being singled out as a ‘Spartan of honour’, in line with the Plutarch passage already discussed. According to Kaibel, perhaps Damainetos was of Doric origin and had given his daughter in marriage to the Athenian Archemachos. In any case, as we often find in metrical epitaphs, its literary pretensions become clear in the use of such terms as the epic *pote* (πότε) in the third verse: we remember the epitaph of young Kroisos, victim of Ares, who died *one day* in battle. Loraux herself, whom we have just cited, has said as much: ‘le vocabulaire est celui de l’épopée, depuis le trépas gémissant

(στονόνεντι πότμωι) jusqu'au *mégaron*, et de l'expression du courage par la force (ἰφθίμαν: courageuse) à la désignation de l'épouse comme compagne de couche (εὔνιν), en passant par l'indétermination du πότε (un jour)'.²⁹

The next epitaph with this argument, a stele with an inscription in elegiac distichs, reads thus:

- (i) Κλεαγόρα Φιλέου Μελ[ιτέως γυνή].
 (ii) εἰς φῶς παῖδ' ἀνάγουσα βίου φάος ἦν[υσας αὐτή], |
 Κλεαγόρα, πλείστης σωφροσύνης [μέτοχος], |
 ὥστε γονεῦσιν πέ[ρ]ος ἀγήρατο[ς] [λίπες - -] |
 ἐσθλῶν [- - - - -]
 (iii) Φιλέας | Φιλάγρου | Μελιτεύς³⁰

- (i) *Kleagora, wife of Phileas of Melite*
 (ii) *In bringing a child to the light of life, you put out the light of your own,*
Kleagora, you who shared in the finest good judgement,
So that you have left your parents undying sorrow.
 (...)
 (iii) *Phileas, son of Philagros of Melite.*

To live is to be in the light. This text establishes an opposition between light and darkness that would become customary, especially in Hellenistic literary epitaphs, but in this case it has a two-fold value, as it also plays with the image of birth as coming into the light of life. The contrast between the light that shines on the new-born child and the light that faded from the mother as she gave birth is what renders this epitaph special, because of its very sophisticated use of the 'light imagery' common to other funerary epigrams.³¹

With so few examples to draw from, on this occasion I will also consider the metrical epitaphs from the third century BC, reproduced at least in part in a recent publication.³² There are only two, both from Thessaly, but they are worth some attention, particularly because of the lexicon that is used to refer to a woman who died in childbirth:

- Λυπρὸν ἐφ' Ἡδίστηι Μοῖραι τότε νῆμα ἀπ' ἀτράκτων
 κλώσαν, ὅτε ὠδίνος νύμφη ἀπηντίασεν·
 σχετλίη· οὐ γὰρ ἔμελλε τὸ νήπιον ἀνκαλιεῖσθαι
 μαστῶι τε ἀρδεύσειν χεῖλος ἐοῖο βρέφους·
 ἐν γὰρ ἔσειδε φάος, καὶ ἀπήγαγεν εἰς ἓνα τύμβον
 τοὺς δισσοὺς ἀκρίτως τοῖσδε μολοῦσα Τύχη.³³

- A painful thread for Hediste did the Moirai spin out from their spindles*
when the young wife reached the throes of childbirth:
Wretched one! for she was not to hold her new-born child
nor nurse the lips of her new-born at her breast.
He saw the light of life one single day, and Fate has led them
both to a single grave, coming on the two with no distinction.

This funerary stele consists of two parts that were discovered during

different archaeological excavations. The upper part is painted with a scene depicting a woman on her death bed after giving birth, surrounded by family and friends. The continuation of the painting on the lower part has been lost, but the metrical inscription translated above remains.³⁴ The special consideration given to women who died in childbirth is also evident in this stele from Thessaly, which was described by Arvanitopoulos as a *naiskos*, suggesting that the deceased was honoured as a heroine.³⁵ Although other authors do not agree that the form of the stele is that of a *naiskos*, they do agree that it is a special sculptural form used for stelai commemorating women who died in childbirth.³⁶

Hediste is a young wife, a *nymphē* (νύμφη), a name that would perhaps also be appropriate for the protagonist of the next epitaph, which plays with the sense of this threshold situation:

Πουτάλα Πουταλεία κόρα,
 Τιτυρεία γυνά.
 Ὡλεο δὴ στυγερώϊ θανάτῳ προλιποῦσα τοκῆας
 Πωτάλα, ἐγ γαστρὸς κυμοτόκοις ὀδύναις
 οὔτε γυνὴ ἀμπαν κεκλημένη οὔτε τι κούρη.
 πένθος πατρὶ λίπες μητρὶ τε τῇ μελέαι.
 Ἑρμῆου Χθονίου.³⁷

Potala daughter of Potalus
wife of Tityrus.

Has succumbed to a terrible death, abandoning her parents,
Potala, in waves of labour pains from your womb:
you are called neither a complete woman nor a maiden.
You have left pain to your father and to your mother, crushed.
Of Hermes Chthonios.

The epitaph opens with two lines, the first to identify the young woman as a daughter, with a mention of her father (a sense we have already seen with *kore*), the second line indicates her status as a married woman, the wife of a husband who is also mentioned by name. After the two elegiac distichs that form the epitaph itself, the memorial closes with an invocation to Hermes of the Underworld.

These two distichs refer to death in childbirth and make the intriguing affirmation that, as a consequence of that death, the young woman cannot be invoked in either manner that the epitaph itself has presented her: neither *maiden* nor *wife*. Setting aside the rhetorical play that may be involved in this statement,³⁸ it is not an entirely trivial affirmation, and offers us another piece of information: the young woman had not yet had any other children. The woman was only a true *gynē* (γυνή) when she became a mother, and not from the fact of being married.

Another key term in this epitaph is the *hapax kymotokos* (κυμότοκος). It is evident that we are dealing with a metaphor; the question is to decide on its meaning. Literally, *kymotokos* means ‘that produces waves’, and it could thus

refer to 'les flots de sang qui auraient accompagné l'accouchement'.³⁹ This hypothesis should not be discarded using the argument that the details of death could have been expressed more clearly, as is seen in later, Hellenistic epigrams. As we have been observing, it was not customary to elaborate on the causes and details of death; only later literary epitaphs develop further in this direction.⁴⁰ The other option is to consider the term itself, *kyma* (κύμα), 'wave', as having the sense of 'embryo', a metaphorical origin whose use is perfectly documented: the young woman had died 'dans les douleurs de l'enfantement du fruit que tu portais'.⁴¹

It is difficult to be certain, but the presence of waves at sea as a cause of death in the epitaphs of the shipwrecked might endorse the hypothesis that the author of this epigram chose this particular image, uniting one terrible death with another. And so we approach our next topic.

Mourning an empty tomb

The nightmare of death at sea and the unburied victim was familiar to the Greeks from early on. We see it reflected in a ceramic piece from the late eighth century BC, found in Pitheculasae (Ischia), a krater showing one of the earliest examples of Geometric art with figures.⁴² Of course, even the poetry of Homer and Hesiod speaks of terrible deaths at sea,⁴³ but, we might say, with some restraint. In the ceramic piece from Pitheculasae, the harsh consequences of the shipwreck are represented, the fears which epigrams of the Hellenistic period revel in, such as the body never recovered, fodder for the fish.⁴⁴ The impossibility of burial is a recurring motif in these epitaphs. This is a break in the natural course of events, as in the earlier case of youths hindered from reaching the fulfilment of marriage. We find overlapping images, such as the young woman dead in childbirth, mentioned above, who can be called neither *wife* nor *maiden* (οὔτε γυνή πάμπαν κεκλημένη οὔτε τι κόρη), with that of an epitaph from the *Palatine Anthology*, where a young woman's death at sea is the cause that her father cannot accompany her to her wedding, *neither as a maiden nor as a cadaver* (ὅς σε κομίζων / ἐς γάμον οὔτε κόρην ἤγαγεν οὔτε νέκυν),⁴⁵ in a very explicit image associating death and marriage in Hades.

As I have stated, death at sea constitutes one of the rare cases where the type of death is indicated iconographically. In her classical study on Greek epigraphy, Margherita Guarducci points to the stele of Democles as one of the most beautiful surviving examples. In the far upper right, a pensive young man is represented, seated on the bow of a ship.⁴⁶ The rest of the stele is practically empty, emphasizing the loneliness of the victim in the immensity of the sea. In the epigraph, only the young man's name and filiation are indicated: Δημοκλείδης Δημητρίῳ, 'Democles, son of Demetrius'.



Figure 7.1 Grave stele of Democles, early fourth century BC, Attica, Archaeological Museum of Athens: 752 © Getty Images.

Focusing on the metrical epitaphs, we find a few that are dedicated to shipwreck victims in both the Archaic and Classical periods. Later, in the Hellenistic era, this type of epigram develops further, becoming one of the most reproduced subtypes within the genre.

The insatiable sea

To Corinth, Corcyra and Sikinos, one of the Cyclades, belong three Archaic epitaphs composed for shipwreck victims. Each of them contains an explicit mention of death at sea through use of the term *pontos* (πόντος). The first of these, from the mid-seventh century BC, consists of a single hexameter inscribed in boustrophedon:

Δφεινία τόδε [σᾶ|μα], τὸν ὄλεσε π|όντος ἀναι[δέε]ς⁴⁷

Tomb of Deinias, whom the insatiable sea destroyed.

The circumstances in which this memorial was found serve to remind us of the hazards which today's evidence has managed to survive. Lilian H. Jeffery tells the story in an article dedicated to some of these Archaic epitaphs: 'It is recorded that a Greek farmer, ploughing a field, turned up a limestone stele over a metre long, with a carved projection on top, a painted border round the sides of the main face, and an inscription cramped into the upper part. As there was apparently nothing on the long space beneath, the farmer broke off the top piece with the inscription and took it home, leaving the greater part of the shaft behind. Whether it really was blank, or whether there had once been some decoration on it, either painted or incised, must

therefore remain unknown.⁴⁸

The name of Deinias, protagonist of the memorial, is found in the etymological dictionaries as a personal name derived from *deinos* (δεινός), 'terrible', an adjective related in turn to *deido* (δεῖδω), 'to fear'.⁴⁹ A terrible name for a terrible death, also reflected in the use of the verb *olymi* (ὄλλυμι) – we have already had occasion to discuss its appropriateness for heroic death (recall the epitaph of Kroisos, ἡ ὄν ποτ' ἐνὶ προμάχοις ὄλεσε θὼς ὁ ρος Ἄρες). This brief hexametric epitaph, from the mid-seventh century BC, belongs to an era when the Homeric poems had already more or less reached their present form. Though not Homeric, it has what we might call 'Homeric colour'. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the sea is wide (εὐρύς), boundless (ἀπείριτος), wine-coloured (οἶνοψ), purple (ιοειδής), unharvested (ἀτρύγετος); in the *Odyssey*, the stone of Sisyphus is called *laas anaides* (λαῶς ἀναιδής), the reckless, ruthless stone.⁵⁰ In this epitaph, *pontos anaides* (πόντος ἀναιδής), 'the insatiable sea', my translation of preference, may also be the merciless sea, unrelenting as the stone of Sisyphus.

The next example, a public monument (*the people made it*), is from the end of the same century, and is composed of six hexameters that go around the tumulus in a single line, almost ten meters long. The shipwreck victim has received the honorific title of *proxenos*, granted to foreigners who had rendered some special favour to the city.⁵¹ His brother, having come from his homeland, joins the people in raising the memorial:

ἡ υιοῦ Τλασίαφο Μενεκράτεος τόδε σᾶμα
Οϊανθέος γενεάν, τόδε δ' αὐτὸ ἡ δᾶμος ἐποίει.

Τ
Ὁς γὰρ πρόξενος δάμου φίλος· ἀλλ' ἐνὶ πόντοι
ὄλετο, δαμόσιον δὲ καφὸν ῥο[ν – ν ν – -].
Πραξιμένης δ' αὐτὸ ἡ γ[αί]α[ς] ἄπο πατρίδος ἐνθὼν
σὺν δάμ[ο]ι τόδε σᾶμα κασιγνέοιο πονέθεε.⁵²

*This is the tomb of Menekrates, son of Tlasias,
Oianthian of race, the people made this for him.
He was proxenos, a friend of the people, but at sea
he died, a public misfortune [...]
Praximenes, having come from his homeland,
together with the people vigorously raised this tomb to his brother.*

The memorial is a cenotaph, as expected in the case of shipwreck, and confirmed by excavations that did not find any remains under the tumulus.⁵³ It has been noted that the emphasis on the work carried out to raise the memorial of this illustrious foreigner (the tumulus having a very Archaic appearance), might be a literary reference to Homeric funerals, where the warriors exerted themselves in the construction of a tumulus over the hero's grave.⁵⁴

Finally, our last example from the Archaic age is a marble stele raised in honour of a shipwreck victim by a family member who is identified with the

unusual term of *matrokasignetos* (ματροκασίγνητος):

μνᾶμα νέωι {Vε} φθι[ῒ]ν[ωι] ΣΩΦ ικρα[τ][ῖ]δα[ι] τὸδ' ἔθηκε|
ματροκασί[γνητος]: | πόντ[ῳ]δ', [αὐ]τ[όν] | μ' ἐκάλυφεν.⁵⁵

*This memorial was placed for young Sosikratides, dead,
by his maternal uncle. As for me, the sea has hidden me.*

The translations that I have been able to find for this epitaph, only three and all in English, are not unanimous in their interpretation. *ματροκασίγνητος* is translated as ‘brother’⁵⁶ or ‘uterine brother’,⁵⁷ in two of them; the third opts for ‘mother’s brother’,⁵⁸ a possibility to which I am also inclined. It is true that the dictionaries offer the first of these two meanings as the only option for this term, in adherence to the authority of Aeschylus, who in verse 962 of *The Eumenides*, has the Erinyes address the Moirai as *matrokasignetai* (ματροκασιγνήται), ‘sisters, daughters of the same mother’, something that all the translators are quick to explain in a note: the Moirai, like the Erinyes, are daughters of the Night. But mythical genealogies are tricky, and there are other versions: the Moirai, according to Hesiod, are daughters of Zeus and Themis (*Theog.* 901–4); the Erinyes, according to the same poet, were born from maimed Uranus’s drops of blood, gathered to the breast of Gaia.

Arguing the meaning of *matrokasignetai* in this passage from Aeschylus is not my intent here; the meaning of ‘sisters born from the same mother’ is probable and traditionally understood, but I do not believe one can entirely rule out that *matrokasignetos* (ματροκασίγνητος, fem. -ήτη) also means ‘brother/sister of the mother’, a strict parallel with *patrokasignetos* (πατροκασίγνητος, fem. -ήτη), ‘brother/sister of the father’. This use of *patrokasignetos* as ‘paternal uncle’ is observed in the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Theognis*, and is thus noted in the dictionaries; by contrast, the only appearance of *matrokasignetos*, outside this epitaph, is found in the Aeschylus piece, which may account for the fact that my proposed reading has hardly been considered.⁵⁹ In fact, the form *ματροκασίγνητος* is not reflected in the dictionaries; they only offer the feminine form *μητροκασιγνήτη as a conjecture, based on the cited Aeschylus passage. One good argument in favour of the reading ‘mother’s brother, maternal uncle’, is that *matrokasignetos* understood as ‘uterine brother’ would come into unjustifiable competition with the term *adelphos* (ἄδελφός), whose etymological meaning is precisely that, ‘born from the same womb’. In fact, the creation of this new term in Greek, *adelphos*, in order to express a close fraternal tie via the mother, should be understood alongside the meanings acquired by similar terms such as the ancient *phrater* (φρατήρ), referring to the members of a large family, joined not necessarily by blood ties, but rather by a religious connection, and the more recent *kasignetos* (κασίγνητος), meaning blood brother, but also cousin, and emphasizing the paternal connection. However, one must also remember that there is a

specific name for maternal uncle in Greek: *metros* (μήτρως).⁶⁰

In any case, as is typical with this type of evidence, we clearly have no more information or context that can lead us to a firm conclusion about this epitaph. I do find it interesting to take note of this term which does not appear elsewhere, and when interpreting its meaning, to remember the particular place and importance of the figure of mother's brother in the set of family relations. The important role of the maternal uncle in the education and care of boys has been studied in detail by Jan N. Bremmer, with examples that extend from Homer to the discourses of Aeschines and Demosthenes in the fourth century BC;⁶¹ this epitaph from the fifth century BC could be added to the corpus of evidence supporting this thesis.

Having reached the Classical age, we continue to find metric epitaphs dedicated to shipwreck victims. The following epitaph, from Amorgos, comes to us from the first half of the fourth century BC,

Κλεομάνδρο τόδε σῆμα, τὸν ἐμ πόντῳ κίχῃ μοῖρα, |
δακρύεν δὲ πόλει πένθος ἔθηκε θανών.⁶²

*This is the tomb of Kleomandros, whom the Moira reached at sea
and whose death left the city in tearful lament.*

Most of the available information for studying the Greek *polis* is information specifically about the *polis* of Athens. What about the c. 1499 other ancient Greek *poleis*? This is the question that Mogens H. Hansen asks, and in order to answer it, he turns to the rich corpus of inscriptions. Specifically, he cites this epitaph as an example of the identification between *polis* and citizens: in Arkesine on the island of Amorgos the whole *polis* mourns over a drowned citizen.⁶³

The following epitaph belongs to the same period, formed by four elegiac distichs and found in Piraeus:

- (i) Ξενόκλεια χρηστή.
- (ii) ἡθέους προλιπούσα κόρας δισσὰς Ξενόκλεια |
Νικάρχου θυγάτηρ κεῖται ἀποφθιμένη, |
οἰκτρὰν Φοίνικος παιδὸς πενθὸς αὖτε τελευτήν, |
ὃς θάνεν ὀκταέτης ποντίῳ ἐν πελάγει. |
- (iii) τίς θρήνων ἀδαῆς ὃς σὴν μοῖραν, Ξενόκλεια, |
οὐκ ἐκλεῖ, δισσὰς ἡ προλιπούσα κόρας |
ἡθέους παιδὸς θνείσκεις πόθῳ, ὃς τὸν ἄνοικτον |
τύμβον ἔχει δνοφερῶι κείμενος ἐμ πελάγει;⁶⁴

(i) *Xenokleia, a good woman*

(ii) *Leaving behind two unmarried daughters, Xenokleia,
daughter of Nicarchos, lies dead,
after having mourned the pitiful end of her son Phoinix,
who died at open sea at the age of eight.*

(iii) *Who is so ignorant of threnodies that he does not mourn your misfortune, Xenokleia,
who leaving behind two unmarried daughters
you die from the painful absence of a son possessed by an unmourned*

This case is not strictly the epitaph of a shipwreck victim. The epigram is dedicated to a mother, Xenokleia, who has died of *pothos* for a son who disappeared at sea. I have translated this as ‘painful absence’.⁶⁵ The term *pothos* (πόθος), more literally ‘longing’, is placed in contrast to *himeros* (ἡμερος), especially in erotic language: the latter burns in the lover’s breast before the object of its desire; the former breaks one’s heart because of the absence of this object. One desire about to be satisfied, in contrast to a desire with no prospect, heartrending.⁶⁶ Undoubtedly, the translation ‘painful absence’ is not entirely satisfactory, but I believe it is not entirely unfaithful to the context, namely, the feared misfortune of one lost at sea: the body never recovered, and the ‘unmourned grave’. With regard to the structure of this epigram, Marco Fantuzzi has conducted a detailed study of the taste for variation on a theme, of which this epitaph is a good example.⁶⁷ Virtually the same information is given in (ii) and (iii), but there is a change in perspective: in (ii), the message is delivered in an impersonal voice that speaks of Xenokleia in the third person, announcing that she is buried there, whereas in (iii), an external mourner addresses the deceased in the second person and shows compassion for Xenokleia’s pain as a mother who has suffered the loss of a child at sea.⁶⁸

In another epitaph, from the same time and place as the last, the protagonists are a father, a son and a daughter lost in the Aegean Sea, a more precise reference than the vague indication of ἐν πόντῳ, ‘at sea’, which we have seen so far:

(i) Κώμαρχος, | Ἀπολλόδωρος, | Σωσώ | Ἡρακλειώται.

(ii) οὐ τὸ χρεῶν εἴμ<α>ρται, ὅρα | τέλος ἡμέτερον νῦν· |
ἡμεῖς γὰρ τρεῖς ὄντε | [π]ατήρ υἱὸς <θ>υγ<ά>τηρ τε |
[θ]νήσκομεν Αἰγ<α>ίου | κύμασι πλαζόμενοι.⁶⁹

(i) Komarchos, Apollodoros and Soso, from Herakleia.

(ii) You, whose destiny is decided, look now at our own end.

We, being three, father, son and daughter,

have died when traveling the waves of the Aegean.

Finally, on a Macedonian stele from the fourth century BC, we read a brief, expressive epitaph:

(i) Δίφιλος | Διονυσίο | Καύνιος

(ii) Στρώμονος ἐν στόματι | ναυαγῆσας ἔλιπον φῶς.⁷⁰

(i) Diphilos of Kaunos, son of Dionysios

(ii) After being shipwrecked at the mouth of the Strymon, I abandoned the light of life.

This last verse, with the image of the victim who loses life and light at sea, serves to reinforce a certain literary relationship between these epitaphs and those of women who died in childbirth. While the contrast between

light and darkness, and between sound and silence, are quite frequent in all kinds of epitaphs, here this opposition is even stronger, for other reasons. In the case of death in childbirth, there is the contrast between bringing to light a new life, and losing one's own light of life, as we saw in Kleagora's epitaph; in the epigrams dedicated to victims of shipwreck we find an insatiable sea that deprives its dead of burial, hiding them in its depths, and adopting a function of covering, *kalyptein* (καλύπτειν), that in the normal course of events is reserved for the earth.

Rewards for Piety ... Next to Persephone

In the course of these discussions we have had little occasion to consider information that Archaic and Classical funerary epigraphy might offer concerning the Ancient Greeks' beliefs about the afterlife. Instead I have insisted that both the inscriptions and the iconographic representations are retrospective in nature, in the sense that they help construct a socially idealized image of those who have died, an image that the city wishes to recall. Beginning in the fourth century BC, although there is no radical change in this situation, expressions that hint at certain eschatological beliefs begin to appear, sporadically, in the epitaphs. They are not very precise references, but I will try to analyse them as systematically as possible, and to relate them to other types of evidence from the same period. Before looking at these texts, I once again recall that the idea of an immortal soul, which therefore might receive awards or punishment in the afterlife, is an entirely historical notion, gradually introduced among the Greeks through different channels.

Mortal men, gods with no soul

One particular surviving stele with inscription is quite illustrative in regard to the retrospective nature of Classical funerary art. The memorial recalls Aristocles, a bearded man on horseback, accompanied by an assistant. The inscription reads thus:

πολλὰ μεθήλικίας ὁμοήλικος ἡδέ|α παίσας
 ἐκ γαίας βλαστὼν γαῖα πάλι|ν γέγονα
 εἰμὶ δὲ Ἀριστοκλῆς Πειραι|εύς, παῖς δὲ Μενώνος.¹

*After many pleasant amusements with the youths of my age,
 I am earth once again, I who was born from the earth.
 I am Aristocles of the Piraeus, son of Menon.*

Compared to an expression that we have often seen in the funerary epigraphy, where the earth receives or hides the body of the deceased, the present idea is new and different: the body *becomes* earth. Use of the expression γαῖα γέγονα, 'I have become earth', does not allow us to take the epitaph's silence about a possible afterlife to be merely coincidental.² In contrast to isolated examples of eschatological tendencies, the conservative orientation of this funerary inscription is what comes through here, the enduring aristocratic values of Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. I

could not agree with this more strongly, and Guthrie also lends his support with the following words: 'bodily strength and vitality seemed ... such glorious things that even if the soul continued to exist, its separation from the body must mean that it had lost all that was worth living for'.³ Aristocles (what better name for an aristocrat?), after having shared the enjoyments of life with his peers, becomes earth and returns to the earth from which he was born.

Elsewhere I have studied this epitaph in relation to another of equal interest – the funerary epigram dedicated to Sosikrates, found in Thessaly and dated in the fourth century BC.⁴ This epigram seems surprising in the general context of funeral epigraphy that we are familiar with. Its strangeness is perceived in two specific aspects: in its allusion to a possibly violent death, *adikoi thanatoi* (ἀδίκῳ θανάτῳ) and, in the third line, its mention of ether and the wandering soul:

Σωσικράτους τόδε μνήμα χυτὴ κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει,
ὃς θάν' οὐχ ὁσίως ἀλλ' ἀδίκῳ θανάτῳ
ψυχὴ δ' αἰθερίῳ κόσμῳ μειχθεῖσα πλανᾶται. *vacats*

*This grave of Sosikrates is hidden by a mound of earth,
he died not piously but with an iniquitous death,
and his soul, mixed with the ethereal heaven, wanders.*

In the first line, the expression χυτὴ κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει evokes verses from the *Iliad* (πατρὸς δ' ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἐγὼ γένος εὖχομαι εἶναι / Τυδέος, ὃν Θήβησι χυτὴ κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει);⁶ the rest of the epitaph, however, is far from conventional. The allusion to an iniquitous death, *adikoi thanatoi*, along with the soul wandering aimlessly, makes us think of the following words from Erwin Rohde: 'At Athens even in the fourth and fifth centuries the belief still survived in undiminished vigour that the soul of one violently done to death, until the wrong done to him was avenged upon the doer of it, would wander about finding no rest.'⁷ As is nearly always the case when studying these epitaphs, we have little or no information about the causes of death, but these lines may suggest an episode of violent death, and therefore, one of those *biaiothanatoi* to which Sarah Iles Johnston has dedicated an indispensable study.⁸ To justify this inclination, we can look more closely at the meaning of the terms used in the epitaph: *hosios* (ὅσιος) belongs to religious language, and is understood in relation to and by opposition to *hieros* (ἱερός), such that *hieros* refers to what is sacred, and *hosios*, in reference to a man and his behavior, indicates conformity to the religious order. However, in the negative, both terms are equivalent: both *anieros* and *anosios* bring on the wrath of the gods. The murderer is the *anosios* par excellence.⁹ In addition, the typical use of the formula *hosios kai dikaios* (ὅσιος καὶ δίκαιος) to indicate what is permitted to men by the gods¹⁰ makes the negation of both terms, when referring to the death of Sosikrates (οὐχ ὁσίως ἀλλ' ἀδίκῳ θανάτῳ), that much stronger.¹¹

We will never know whether Sosikrates was murdered, but we can be sure that if it says that he died *impiously with an iniquitous death* in a fourth-century BC epitaph, when it was far from common to give any details of the type of death involved, when it seems that there was even an unwritten rule that disallowed it, then we are dealing with circumstances so exceptional that whoever raised the memorial in his honour could not help but allude to them. Equally original is the reference to the fate of Sosikrates's soul, which being *mixed with the ethereal heaven, wanders aimlessly* (ψυχὴ δ' αἰθερίῳ κόσμῳ μειχθεῖσα πλανᾶται); I believe it relates to the criminal death. I insist on the importance of finding an expression like this in the fourth century BC; later, in the Hellenistic period, an allusion to the heavenly bodies as a dwelling place for the soul is not so striking.¹²

The importance of these two epigrams, of Aristocles and of Sosikrates, is that both of them, in some small way, confirm a certain eschatological concern on the part of ordinary individuals, in the early fourth century BC. It is not easy to ascribe this concern to any specific line of religious thought or mysteries. It is quite tempting, though it would be a gross simplification, to consider these two characters, from Thessaly and Attica respectively, as paradigms of the land of magicians in one case, and the land of the proud autochthons, in the other.

In any case, we are dealing with two exceptions. As I commented in the introduction, citing Burkert, it was no less than a revolution that the epithet used by Homer to characterize the gods (the *Immortals*) would become an essential trait of the human being. The soul was not always immortal, we would say. Only the gods are Immortal, perhaps precisely because they have no soul? The fact that the gods have no *psyche* (ψυχή), a reflection taken from Nussbaum,¹³ the fact that no poet has ever spoken of the soul of any divine being, I take as one more example of that constant in Greek thought that separates gods from men and clearly delimits the characteristics of one and the other.

Nonetheless, in certain funerary monuments of our corpus, though few and far between, we find some indications that allow us to speculate about that *post mortem* destination. We now turn our attention to these examples. Focusing especially on the epitaphs of the fourth century BC, I will attempt to articulate a discussion on what these have to say about *eusebeia* (piety) and the imagery employed with *Persephone's chamber*.

Rewards for piety

In the introductory pages of this book I described the problems that are involved in translating a term like *psyche* (ψυχή). Though it is inseparable from what each era has imagined about the soul, I nevertheless decided to follow this conventional translation (ψυχή = soul), with a warning about the differences between *psyche* and *soul*, and especially staying away from the

unhistorical idea of an 'immortal soul'. Some epitaphs made reference to its existence, speaking of the separation of body and soul after death: the soul rose into the ether, an idea of the *psyche* as a kind of 'life's breath', while the body was covered by the earth. This separation of the two did not imply the ongoing existence of the soul, much less some eternal state, at least if we set the fourth century BC as our boundary, as an important transition point.

What other indicators might point to some hope of continuity, to some kind of afterlife? A connection with the idea of *eusebeia* (piety) seems to provide a clue.

Walter Burkert has explained very well how the lexicon that refers to dealing with the divine has much to do with fear: *theoudes* (θεουδής), 'god-fearing', formed from *deido* (δείδω), 'to fear', and, from the same root, *deisidaimonia* (δεισιδαιμονία), which initially meant fear or respect toward the *demonēs*, but later took on a negative content and the meaning of 'superstition'. Another root expresses the fear that one feels towards the gods: *seb-* present in *sebas* (σέβας), 'fear, religious respect', and in *eusebeia* (εὐσέβεια), one of the terms used for 'piety'. *Eusebeia* seems to describe piety in regard to the gods in its most balanced sense, without fear or superstition: *eusebeia* consists of maintaining the customs of one's ancestors and of the city.¹⁴ It is a type of *political piety*, based on respect for the gods and for one's parents; I spoke of this earlier, citing Louise Bruit, when discussing fourth-century BC epitaphs where *eusebeia* appeared for the first time. Another important idea in relation to *eusebeia* was pointed out by Rudhardt, in his effort to define the terms of the Greek religious lexicon, carefully distinguishing one from another. This scholar indicates that, despite the similarities between *eusebeia* (εὐσέβεια) and *hosiotēs* (ὁσιότης), 'si les deux séries de mots conviennent aux mêmes comportements, ils se distinguent de la manière suivante: alors que la ὁσιότης définit ces comportements en considération d'un ordre objectif avec lequel ils s'harmonisent, l'εὐσέβεια les caractérise par leur accord avec une disposition intérieure dont ils procèdent'.¹⁵ This attention to subjectivity is important, reinforcing the idea that *eusebeia* was praised in the epitaphs as a virtue that merited some later reward.

Looking back at the texts:¹⁶ we had an epitaph dedicated to Archestrate, who, in the first person, says she has died after living 'a pious and judicious life' (εὐσεβῇ ἀσκήσασα βίον καὶ σώφρονα θνήσκω) and, leaving behind mother, brother, husband and son, she adds that now she is covered 'by the earth that is common to all who perish' (με χθῶν ἥδε καλύπτει ἡ πᾶσιν κοινὴ τοῖς ἀπογιγνομένοις). We should examine this allusion to an earth that is common to all, where perhaps (only perhaps) it might be related to the 'destiny of equals' that certain mystery movements were promising. I will come back to this. Continuing with piety, I also examined the epitaph of Hedytion, a woman who had an appropriate funeral thanks to the piety of her daughter (εὐσεβία θυγατρός), on this occasion as well, the deceased

spoke in the first person, assuring us that she had had a good death (the only appearance of the term εὐθανάτως in our corpus of epitaphs), and that she, envied, was making her way to Persephone's chamber (στεῖχω ζηλωτῇ Φερσεφόνης θάλαμον). Finally, in the Nikoptoleme epitaph, the hope was expressed that there would be some recognition for piety, next to Persephone (εἰ δέ τις εὐσεβίας παρὰ Φερσεφόνει χάρις ἐστίν). This last epitaph is the clearest in regard to the idea I wish to suggest: that there may be a gradual, but qualitative, change in the conception of *eusebeia*, where it ceases to be merely an attitude (the formalism of which Greek religiousness is so often accused)¹⁷ and becomes connected to a belief that showing piety towards the gods in this life, may have its reward after death. Another example, which mentions Persephone but not *eusebeia*, is found in the epitaph of Melitta, a nursemaid. The stele is preserved, and represents her with a little girl, Hippostrate, who lends her voice to the epigram:

(i) [[Μέλιττα]] Ἀπολλοδώρου | ἰσοτελοῦ θυγάτηρ | (ii) Μέλιττα | (iii) τίτθῃ

(iv) ἐνθάδε τὴν χρηστὴν ^τ↓[τθ]ν κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει

Ἱπποστράτης, καὶ νῦν π[ο] ^θεῖ σε,
καὶ ζῶσάν σ' ἐφίλ|ουν, τίτθῃ, καὶ νῦν σ' ἔτι τιμῶ
οὐσαν καὶ κατὰ γῆς, | καὶ τιμήσω σε ἄχρι ἅν ζῶ.

οἶδα δὲ σοὶ ὅτι καὶ κατὰ [γ] | ῆς, εἴπερ χρηστοῖς γέρας ^εστίν,
πρώτῃ σοι τ [↓][μα]|ί, τίτθῃ, παρὰ Φερσεφόνει Πλούτωνί τε κεῖνται.¹⁸

(i) Melitta, daughter of Apollodorus, isoteles. (ii) Melitta. (iii) Nursemaid.

(iv) Here beneath the earth is hidden the good nurse

of Hippostrate, and now she longs for her.

While you lived, I loved you, nursemaid, and still today I honour you,
when you are beneath the earth, and I will honour you as long as I live.

I know that for you, even beneath the earth, if there is any reward for the good,
for you first of all, nursemaid, there are honours next to Persephone and Pluto.¹⁹

Once again we find the possibility that there may be some reward in the realm of Persephone and Pluto, for those who have shown their merits in life. Another peculiarity of this epigram: the name Pluto appears, for the first and only time in the Hansen corpus of epigrams. This detail is of utmost importance, and will be addressed later on, as will another epitaph's veiled reference to a destiny that is *equal* for all.

Recalling once again the fact that these epitaphs with allusions to *eusebeia* are all epitaphs of women, let us turn to Queen Persephone's appearance in funerary epigraphy.

Persephone's chamber

The expression *Phersephones thalamos* (Φερσεφόνης θάλαμος), 'Persephone's chamber', is first documented in the fourth century BC, and we have found it in several of the texts discussed.²⁰ We will review these epitaphs here, and

also consider others where the same expression or similar formulas appear.²¹

Before beginning, we must emphasize one important detail: in the funerary epigrams of the fifth century BC, Persephone is never mentioned, and Hades is the underworld figure that is named, sometimes as a god, sometimes as the place inhabited by the dead. The first documented example referring to Hades is found in a very fragmented epitaph of a boy who is said to have gone 'to Hades before his time' (ἄ ἡ ὅριον ἐς Αἴδαο);²² the next, quite extended and in hexameters, is dedicated to brave Pythion of Megara, who saved three Athenian tribes and 'went down to Hades blessed in the eyes of all' (ἐς Αἶδα κατέβη πᾶσιν μακαριστὸς ἰδέσθαι);²³ also from the second half of the fifth century BC is the famous memorial, with its surviving stele, of two young brothers who, snatched away by a *daimon*, went to 'the house of Hades' (δόμον Ἄιδος);²⁴ an epitaph from Thessaly, in very poor condition, begins with the invocation 'Sphinx, guardian of Hades, to whom ...?' (σφίξ, ἡ αἰδ[α]οῦ φύον Τίλιν').²⁵ I imagine that the text would continue to inquire of the funerary sphinx about the person buried there; another very fragmentary epitaph from Thessaly offers the expression 'headed for Hades' (οἰ[λ]χετ[αι] δ' εἰς Ἀΐδαν);²⁶ from Thera we have a brief, damaged epitaph that speaks of a young boy dead before his time, who went 'to the house of Hades' (... ἄ ἡ ὅρα παθὸν δόματ' ἔ[β]α[ς] Αἴδα);²⁷ from Egypt we have a youth 'servant of Hades' (Αἰΐδου θεραπεύω);²⁸ finally, on a poorly preserved marble stele of unknown origin, we find the expression 'in Hades' (ἐν Αἰδεώ).²⁹

In the fourth century BC, we continue to find Hades in a number of epitaphs, in different parts of Greece, and on stelai dedicated to men, to women and to children: on one fragmentary epitaph, probably dedicated to a man, we read the expression 'next to Hades' (παρ' Αἰ[δης]);³⁰ a twelve-year-old girl, in an Attic epigram that I have discussed, is snatched away 'by Hades, cause of great weeping' (ὦ πολύκλαυθ' Αἰδη);³¹ in another epitaph, with a surviving stele, a man leaves behind his splendid old age, and makes his way 'to the realm of Hades' (βασίλεια Αἰδῶος);³² from Eretria we find the epitaph of a child, 'snatched away by the Moira with Hades from the breast of his mother' (νῦν δὲ ἀπὸ μαστοῦ μητρὸς ἀφείλετο Μοῖρα σὺν Αἰδῇ);³³ an elegiac distich from Thessaly informs us that the memorial is dedicated to a man by his wife and children, 'if perchance in Hades there might also be some satisfaction for the one who rests there' (εἴ τις κῆν Αἰδαὶ κειμένῳ ἔσσι χάρις);³⁴ also from Thessaly is the epitaph dedicated to a woman, where we read that she would not have abandoned the light of the sun 'if Hades had any pity for the excellence of the dead' (εἰ δ' ἀρετῆς ἔνεκεν θνητῶν ὠικτειρέ τιν' Αἰδης);³⁵ from Acarnania, an epitaph dedicated to a youth who died for his country in the prime of life, stating that 'Hades welcomed him' (σε Αἰδης[ς] ὑπεδέξατο);³⁶ the name Hades is also found in a poorly preserved epitaph dedicated to a young man fallen in battle;³⁷ finally,

in another distich from Rhodes the tomb itself speaks to us of a man named Simias, who, slaughtered by the Moira, entered 'the dwelling of Hades' (δῶμ' ἐπέρασε Ἀΐδα).³⁸

A review of the presence of Hades in funerary epigraphy reveals continuity from the fifth to the fourth centuries BC, with unrestricted usage, appearing in different parts of Greece and in the epitaphs of men and women, of youths fallen in battle and even young children. Although some of the texts are in poor condition, those that can be clearly read offer no references to any future reward in connection with this divine being. The lexicon of piety has no place in the epitaphs where Hades intervenes (if anything, the opposite could be true, as in the woman's epitaph from Thessaly, where it explicitly states that this person would not have died if Hades had any consideration for excellence); moreover, certain negative aspects are emphasized, such as his role as abductor in his frequent appearances in the epitaphs of children.³⁹

The situation is different, however, when it comes to Queen Persephone, whose appearance follows very specific patterns. Her name appears for the first time in the fourth century BC, and is only documented in Attica, predominantly in epitaphs dedicated to women. I have already discussed some of these, and we shall bring them to mind again, with a view to explaining the specific use of the expression 'Persephone's chamber' (Φερσεφόνης θάλαμος).

Let us begin with the epigrams where Persephone appears, but with no reference to her chamber. The first of these is the epitaph of a man, Nikobolos, who was much remembered: 'you abandoned the bright light of the sun, and greatly missed by your loved ones, you descended to the dwelling of Persephone' (ἔλιπες / Νικόβολε, ἥελίῳ λαμπρὸν φῶς, Περσεφόνης δὲ / δ[ῶμ]α ποθεινὸς ἔων σοῖ[σι φίλο]ις κατέβας).⁴⁰ From my point of view, the presence of Persephone in this case would be perfectly interchangeable with Hades, whom we have seen in identical expressions: descending to the dwelling of Hades / Persephone (καταβαίνειν δῶμα Ἀΐδαο / Περσεφόνης). Tsagalis, who calls attention to the term 'dwelling' (δῶμα) instead of 'chamber' (θάλαμος), explains this substitution for stylistic and metrical reasons; but, above all, he believes the main motivation is to keep the mention of Persephone in the same line as the reference to abandoning the light of the sun, thereby reinforcing the light/darkness opposition that is so common in the epitaphs. What Tsagalis explicitly rules out is the absence of Persephone's *chamber* having anything to do with gender, a possibility that I am not so quick to exclude.⁴¹ The mention of the queen's chamber is also absent from the nursemaid's epitaph that I have just discussed, where we found the expression 'next to Persephone and Pluto' (παρὰ Φερσεφόνει Πλούτωνί τε); nor is it found in the Nikoptoleme epitaph also discussed, with its allusion to a possible reward for piety next to Persephone (εἰ δέ τις εὐσεβίας παρὰ Φερσεφόνει χάρις ἐστίν).

In the remaining funerary epigrams of this period in which the goddess appears, she welcomes the deceased to her chamber. So it is in our first epitaph, opening with the words ‘Ares loves the brave’, by which we imagine a young man fallen in battle; in the final verse he is said to have ‘reached the chamber that welcomes all, the chamber of Persephone’ (ἦλθ’ ἐπ[ί] πάνδεκτον Φερσεφόνης θάλαμον).⁴² I emphasize here that the queen’s chamber is described as *pandekton* (πάνδεκτον), ‘that welcomes all’, since we find something similar in another epitaph also dedicated to a man, young Dionysius, also discussed earlier, where we read that ‘from Ananke, from inexorable Persephone you have the chamber that is common to all’ (τὸν ἀνάνκης / κοινὸν Φερσεφόνης πᾶσιν ἔχεις θάλαμον). The other four funerary epigrams where this image appears are dedicated to women. In the final verse of one early fourth-century epitaph, we read that ‘Phanagora is welcomed to the chamber of Persephone’ (Φαναγόραν κατέχει Φερσεφόνης θάλαμος),⁴³ the identical expression that also closes the Mnesarete epitaph we discussed earlier (Μνησαρέτην κατέχε Φερσεφόνης θάλαμος).⁴⁴ From the mid century we have the memorial dedicated to young Heraclea, which I reproduced and discussed earlier,⁴⁵ who left ‘her mother’s home’ (μητρὸς προλιποῦσα μέ[λ]αθρον) to go to ‘Persephone’s chamber’ (Φερσεφόνης θαλάμους): perhaps it is significant that, instead of the usual mention of the dead maiden leaving her father’s house, here the mother is the one mentioned – an echo from the mythical tale of Demeter and Persephone? Finally, let us recall the verses dedicated to Hedition, the woman whose pious daughter raised a memorial for her, and who, in her old age and after a ‘good death’ (εὐθανάτως), she made her way, ‘envied, to Persephone’s chamber’ (στείχω ζηλωτὴ Φερσεφόνης θάλαμον).⁴⁶

In the light of this evidence, we cannot state that the expression ‘Persephone’s chamber’ is reserved only for women’s epitaphs, but that it is found there more often; and when it is used for men, in the two cases mentioned, it is specified as a common chamber, where all are received. I have indicated that this expression, ‘Persephone’s chamber’, is documented for the first time in the fourth century BC, and perhaps its first use (verse 1022 of Euripides’s *The Suppliants*, Φερσεφόνας ἦξω θαλάμους) had a strong influence on its later appearances in literary history. Perhaps more emphasis should be given to the type of context in which this expression was used: in the mouth of Evadne, when she was about to cast herself onto the pyre of her husband Capaneus. This passage from Euripides may have had such an impact that Persephone’s chamber, not her dwelling or kingdom, would become an inappropriate image for an Athenian man, or at least, from our examples, for an *adult* man.

And so it is that *eusebeia*, quite clearly, and Persephone’s chamber, to a large extent, are associated with the female sphere. In very few cases, usually in women’s epitaphs, but also in some epitaphs of men, we have seen the suggestion of hope of an afterlife, as a reward for piety in one’s earthly

life. Might the epitaphs that seem to offer evidence for this idea be associated with followers of mystery cults?

Epitaphs of the initiated?

The idea that epitaphs that suggest this kind of hope may be linked to the followers of mystery cults (Eleusinian, Dionysiac, Orphic, etc.) can be supported by the fact that Persephone, very much present in these types of cults, also occupies a prominent place in these epitaphs.

Here we are stepping into highly debated territory, with extensive bibliography. Therefore, I will go no further in this last chapter than to point out intriguing coincidences between epitaphs that captured my attention, epitaphs that seem to suggest life after death, and certain texts that belong to the well-known, controversial *lamellae aureae*, gold funerary tablets that were buried with the deceased, in the hand, chest or mouth, having (usually versified) inscriptions with allusions to the soul's journey to the afterlife, geographic indications regarding the landscape of Hades, or greetings to the goddess Persephone, to whom the deceased is being introduced.⁴⁷ Very rarely have I seen any reference relating funerary epigraphy to the *lamellae aureae*. If any relationship were to be established between these two types of evidence, and that comparison were to be somehow enlightening, one would have to examine epitaphs and lamellae that belong to the same epoch. Undoubtedly, the fourth century BC is that moment.⁴⁸

Adhering strictly to the data: the oldest of these tablets belong to the fourth century BC, as do the epitaphs I wish to compare them with. Two of the three that were found in Thurii have the same text, with the following penultimate verse:



νῦν δ' ἰκέτις ἦκω παρὰ ἄγνην Φερσεφόνειαν⁴⁹

I now arrive as a suppliant next to pure Persephone.

We are presented with Persephone, and a *female* voice: *hiketis* (ἰκέτις), which I translate as ‘suppliant’, is a feminine adjective in Greek, in contrast to the masculine *hiketes* (ἰκέτης). Naturally, it has been suggested that the soul (*psyche*) is speaking, not necessarily that the persons buried with the tablets were women. Nonetheless, although the archaeological information recovered from the bodies is sometimes incomplete, as in the case of these tablets from Thurii, in other cases where tablets were found (in Hipponium and Pelina),⁵⁰ the skeletons were indeed women, and this also appears likely elsewhere (Crete).⁵¹ The tablets from Pelina, in Thessaly, were found in 1985 on the chest of a woman in whose grave there was also a small statue with a maenad.⁵² Finally, although from a much later period, the third century AD, the most recent known lamella was found in Rome, also accompanying a deceased woman, by the name of Cecilia Secundina.⁵³ Thus, there is a clear presence of women as subjects, as in the epitaphs in which *eusebeia* and Persephone first appear.

In another tablet from Thurii, also from the fourth century BC, we read the following verses; the first opens by depicting the moment of death, the second closes by speaking of the soul’s arrival with queen Persephone:

ἀλλ' ὀπόταμ ψυχὴ προλίπηι φάος ἀελίοιο

but when the soul abandons the light of the sun
[...]

λειμῶνας τε ἱερὸς καὶ ἄλσεα Φερσεφονείας⁵⁴

sacred meadows and groves of Persephone

We observe an undeniable resemblance to typical epitaph expressions, especially the one dedicated to Nikobolos, cited above: ἔλιπες / Νικόβολε, ἡλίο λαμπρὸν φῶς, Περσεφόνης δὲ / δ[ῶμ]α ποθεινὸς ἐὼν σοῖ[σι φίλο]ις κατέβας (‘you abandoned, Nikobolos, the bright light of the sun, and greatly missed by your loved ones, you descended to the dwelling of Persephone’). The *meadows of Persephone* appear in another epitaph, this time from the third century BC; the unusual nature of this expression in funerary epigraphy has been noted. The same epitaph goes further, mentioning the ‘true, clean soul’ (ἀληθὴς ψυχὴ καὶ καθαρὰ) of the deceased: the reference to the gold lamellae becomes inevitable.⁵⁵ For our purposes, however, I have limited my study to the fourth century BC, where it seems that allusions to the afterlife are still quite *subtle*.

I consider it of particular interest to compare the epitaphs in the case of tablet no. 5, from Thurii, in which line seven presents problems of interpretation: Δεσσποίνας δὲ ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας, ‘I have sunk beneath the breast of Lady, Chthonian Queen’.⁵⁶ Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston, from whom I have taken the translation, propose parallels with the epic and indicate that this line would seem to mean that the initiate has won Persephone’s protection. I agree with this idea, and in support of it I would like to add a pair of texts from the funerary epigraphy. First, the Ariston epitaph, whose first distich reads as follows: ἦ μάλα δὴ σε φίλως ὑπεδέξατο γαῖα ὑπὸ κόλπους, / ὄλβιο^V αἰῶνος μάκος ἀμειψάμεν[ον], ‘You, very especially, the gracious earth took to its breast / fortunate you, who received a long life’.⁵⁷ The deceased is described as *olbios* (ὄλβιος), ‘fortunate’, a term that harks back to the lexicon of the mystery cults. The same term appears in the epitaph of Kydimachos, also very interesting: Κυδίμαχο^V χθὼν ἢ^{δε} πατρίς στέρ[νοι]σι καλύπ^{ΤΕΙ} / ὄλβιον εὐαίωνα βί[ου] πλεύσαντα πρὸς ὄρμον· / παῖδας [γὰρ] παίδων ἐσίδων καὶ γῆρας ἄλ^Ψ[πον] / τὴν πάντων κοινὴν μοῖραν [ἔχει] φθίμενος, ‘Kydimachos this homeland hides in its breast / having made a fortunate, long journey to life’s port of destiny. / Since after seeing his children’s children and old age free of sorrow, / dead, he has the destiny common to all’.⁵⁸ In both epitaphs the earth receives the deceased: ὑπὸ κόλπους in one case, στέρνοισι in this other. The term *olbios* is used in both. In the first epigram the earth proves *philos* (φίλως), ‘gracious’, with the deceased, and in the second he is promised a *koinen moiran* (κοινὴν μοῖραν), a ‘common destiny’ again suggestive of the mystery context. How can we help but think of lines 481–2 from the *Hymn to Demeter*: ὃς δ’ ἀτελής ἱερῶν, ὅς τ’ ἄμμορος, οὐ ποθ’ ὁμοίων / αἴσαν ἔχει φθίμενός περ ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρῶεντι? The uninitiated, the *ateles* (ἀτελής), once dead will not enjoy the ‘destiny of equals’ promised to the initiates, the common destiny perhaps alluded to in the Kydimachos epitaph. The expression ‘the earth takes X to its breast (ὑπὸ κόλπους or στέρνοισι)’ is quite infrequent in the epigrams we are studying, from the Classical period, just as the term *olbios* is also infrequent. The combination of both elements and the comparison with tablet no. 5 from Thurii may be significant.

Let us move on. In the nursemaid epitaph cited above, for the first and only time in the Hansen epitaphs, we noted the appearance of the god Pluto: the child who dedicated the memorial wished that her nursemaid would attain the reward of the good, ‘next to Persephone and Pluto’ (παρὰ Φερσεφόνει Πλούτωνί). Two lamellae from Crete, although examples of later evidence, also carried the names of this underworld couple:

Πλούτωνι
Φερσεφόνῃ[ι]⁵⁹
[Πλού]τωνι καὶ Φ-
[ερσ]οπόνει χαίρεν⁶⁰

In both cases one reads only a greeting to Persephone and Pluto, gods of the underworld.

I have found one final similarity in a lamella from Pella, where a man presents himself before Persephone as a *pious initiate*. It belongs to the fourth century BC, the same era when we find the first mentions of *eusebeia* in the funerary epigraphy:

Φερσεφόνηι
Ποσειδίππος μύστης
εὖσεβής⁶¹

To Persephone, Posidippus, pious initiate

Of course, we cannot know which Posidippus is named here, but as far as time period and location are concerned, it could easily be the epigrammatist Posidippus.⁶²

This is not the only example of lamellae with such short texts; in fact, some contain a single word, the name of the deceased, whether man or woman: Ἐυξένα, Φιλημήνα, Φυλομάγα, Φιλόξενα, Ἥγησίσκα, Βόττακος; in others, as in the case of the Posidippus just mentioned, the condition of *initiate* (μύστης) is added. All the cases just cited belong to the fourth and third centuries BC. In some cases, the name is inscribed on a small gold sheet in the form of a myrtle leaf, placed in the mouth of the corpse; the lamella would thus inform the gods of the name of the recent arrival: the same function provided by the stele among the living.⁶³

I would like to suggest that the funerary epigraphy of the fourth century BC has something to contribute to the study of mystery movements in this era, and that the agreement and concurrence of certain motifs (the importance of Persephone, the mention of *eusebeia*, the use of the term *olbios*, and rewards in the afterlife), in both funerary inscriptions and in the gold lamellae, would indicate some interconnection. I would not venture to be more specific, to link epitaphs to those initiated in the mysteries of one god or another, in the midst of the Eleusinian-Orphic-Dionysiac labyrinth,⁶⁴ but epitaphs and gold lamellae bring the deceased before Queen Persephone, the mysteries cause the initiate to be *fortunate*, *olbios*, in the same way that the epitaphs, for the first time also in the fourth century, speak of a *fortunate death* or of an *olbios death* (recall the old woman who, after a *good death*, εὐθανάτως, made her way, *envied*, to the chamber of Persephone). We may also add the fragmented epitaph where the grave welcomes a *fortunate* (ὄλβιον) man, who has had a *good death* (εὐθανάτον).⁶⁵ In both instances, whether lamellae or funerary epigrams, the terms *eusebeia* and *eusebes*, ‘piety’ and ‘pious’, appear in the evidence at the same time.

I am not suggesting a direct relationship between the two types of epigraphic documentation – the funerary and the lamellae – much less do I assume the existence of ‘Orphic communities’ or any other such group.⁶⁶

Verses with similar allusions to future rewards and to the destiny of the blessed may be found in such illustrious examples as the threnodic fragments of Pindar. One of these reads thus: ὄλβιος ὅστις ἰδὼν κεῖν' εἴσ' ὑπὸ χθόν' / οἶδε μὲν βίου τελευτάν, / οἶδεν δὲ διόσδοτον ἀρχάν, 'blessed is he who having seen, goes beneath the earth: / he knows the end of life, / he knows the beginning given by Zeus'. Tradition ascribes this text to a threnody dedicated to the Alcmaeonid Hippocrates, but as Maria Cannatà indicates, if one can be sure of anything about this fragment, its allusions to Eleusinian mysteries are unmistakable. Cannatà points to affinities of this Pindaric text with verses 480ff. of the *Hymn to Demeter* and to Frag. 837 of Sophocles, where once again we find the same references to blessedness (ὄλβιος ὅς, 'blessed is he who...', begins the verses of this hymn; ὡς τριούλβιοι, 'three times happy...', says the Sophocles fragment) and she concludes that 'the conceptual and verbal agreement among several passages is no indication of literary dependency, rather, these are expressions of religious worship, and therefore fixed. The adjective ὄλβιος, which appears in the three texts, is a technical term for Eleusinian mysteries.'⁶⁷ As for the funerary epigraphy, which might seem to be the most appropriate place for such considerations about the soul and its destiny, no such references are found until the fourth century BC.

What I would emphasize here is the concurrent appearance of the first lamellae, which go back to the late fifth and early fourth centuries BC, and the use of a similar, seemingly cultic vocabulary. Of course, the purpose of one type of evidence and the other are clearly different, as is noted by Radcliffe Edmonds and others: 'In contrast to an ordinary grave marker, which is designed for public viewing, the tablets are meant to be seen only by the deceased and those who buried her. Whereas a grave monument serves, Sourvinou-Inwood notes, as an "articulation of the deceased's social persona and preservation of his memory through the grave monument," the tablet instead articulates the deceased's identity not in public, socio-political terms, but through the appeal to standards meaningful to the deceased personally.'⁶⁸ Notwithstanding, I have wished to point out certain funerary epigrams that, while retaining their status as a monument that targets a broad audience, they also include less standardized expressions than the rest, expressions that are more personal and even in a few cases would be suitable to the tablets.

Calame joked about the Orphic tablets, using the well-known formula (*mutatis mutandis*) *Nothing to do with Orpheus* in referring to them;⁶⁹ someone might also say of the epitaphs *Nothing to do with lamellae*, but the temptation to point out their similarities was too great. Speaking of temptations, I will give in to just one more: a fitting name for these controversial *lamellae* might be *Persephone tablets*.⁷⁰ It is nearly impossible to go against a tradition – well-founded for some, not so for others – since these have always been labelled 'Orphic', but if there is any reigning figure in these lamellae, it is certainly

Death of stone

Iconography may also bring us a bit closer to the afterlife as imagined by the Ancient Greeks. And so we return, at the end of our explorations, to the funerary stelai that have been the focus of this essay. Moving past elements such as the pomegranate and the lotus, despite their clear funerary symbolism in reference to the deceased's *new life*, discussed earlier in Archaic memorials such as Phrasikleia and the so-called Alcmaeonid Stele, I now turn my interest to the image of a *death of stone*.

I have not found the Gorgon Medusa in the funerary monuments I have analysed; her presence in the iconography would be justified by her infernal, chthonic nature, but in fact it is quite rare and limited to the Archaic age.⁷² Neither have I seen her named in the epigraphic texts, but Pindar saw in her a *death of stone*, an image that offers suggestive associations with our topic of study.

Medusa causes Odysseus to retreat to the gates of hell: 'a cold sweat of fear overcame me, lest noble Persephone were to throw out to me from Hades the Gorgon head of the terrible monster' (ἐμὲ δὲ χλωρὸν δέος ἦρει, / μή μοι Γοργεῖν κεφαλὴν δεινοῖο πελώρου / ἔξ 'Αἴδος πέμψειεν ἀγανὴ Περσεφόνηα).⁷³ The head of the Gorgon protects the entry to the world of the dead, in Homer also referred to as heads: 'heads of cadavers deprived of strength' (νεκύων ἀμεμηνὰ κάρηνα).⁷⁴ The same can be seen in a passage from Pindar: [...] 'and he killed the Gorgon, and carrying the motley head with its hair of serpents, a death of stone, he reached where the islanders' ([...] ἔπεφνέν / τε Γοργόνα, καὶ ποικίλον κάρα / δρακόντων φόβαισιν ἦλυθε νασιώταις / λίθινον θάνατον φέρων).⁷⁵

Thus the head of the Gorgon, for this Theban poet, is a 'death of stone'. The association between the two is common, and constitutes a fundamental element in the mythical story of the Medusa. This image brings to mind the funerary stelai, something that Jean-Pierre Vernant expressed clearly: seeing the Gorgon meant being turned into stone, 'bloc aveugle, opaque aux rayons lumineux comme ces stèles funéraires qu'on érige sur les tombeaux de ceux qui ont à tout jamais sombré dans l'obscurité de la mort'.⁷⁶ The blind stone of the stele, we might add, is also mute, at least until some passer-by pauses, lends his own voice and recites the verses inscribed there. To give life to a stone, this is the option within the reach of mere mortals (also, perhaps, more sophisticated), whereas directly endowing a voice would be an expeditious recourse of the gods.⁷⁷

Funerary stelai, just like the stones which are all that remain of those who have looked upon Medusa, are all blind, like the dead themselves, and they have no voice outside of some divine intervention or poetic licence. But what about the voice of the Gorgons? Pindar once again is the one who

mentions, not their *voice*, but a sound they emit – sad, but not unpleasant if we are to believe that Athena invented a new instrument, the flute, in order to imitate it:

[...] τέχνα, τάν ποτε
Παλλὰς ἐφεῦρε θρασειᾶν Γοργόνων
οὔλιον θρήνον διαπλέξαισ' Ἀθάνᾳ
τὸν παρθενίους ὑπὸ τ' ἀπλάτοις ὀφίων κεφαλαῖς
ἄϊε λειβόμενον δυσπενθείϊ σὺν καμάτῳ,
Περσεὺς ὁπότε τρίτον ἄυσεν κασιγνητᾶν μέρος
ἐνναλίᾳ Σερίφῳ λαοῖσι τε μοῖραν ἄγων.
[...] παρθένος αὐλῶν τεύχε πάμφωνον μέλος,
ὄφρα τὸν Εὐρυάλας ἐκ καρπαλιμᾶν γενύων
χρῖμφθέντα σὺν ἔντεσι μιμήσαιοιτ' ἐρικλάγκταν γόνον.
εὗρεν θεός· ἀλλὰ νιν εὐροῖσ' ἀνδράσι θνατοῖς ἔχειν,
ὠνύμασεν κεφαλᾶν πολλᾶν νόμον,
εὐκλεᾶ λαοσσόων μναστῆρ' ἀγόνων

[...] that art, which Pallas Athênê invented when she wove into music the dismal death-dirge of the Gorgons bold – the dirge, that Perseus heard, while it was poured forth, amid direful woe, from beneath those maidens' awful serpent-heads, what time he did to death the third of those sisters three, on the day when he brought doom on sea-girt Serîphus and its people. [...] she essayed to invent the many-voiced music of flutes, that so, by aid of music, she might imitate the cry exceeding shrill that burst from the ravening jaws of Euryalê. 'Twas the goddess that found it: but, when she had found it for the use of mortal men, she called it 'many-headed tune', that glorious incentive to contests, where the folk foregather.⁷⁸

At no time does the poet speak of a *voice*, he does not say *aude* (αὐδή) or *phone* (φωνή); these are heads that exude a lament, and Pindar uses the two common terms for funerary mourning, *threnos* and *goos* (θρήνος and γόος), because the Gorgons mourn the death of their sister Medusa. And the music that Athena manages to imitate with his new instrument receives the name many-headed tune (κεφαλᾶν πολλᾶν νόμον).

The Gorgons *exude* weeping for their sister Medusa, and, curiously, the verb used by the poet, *leibo* (λείβω), is the same one that drew our attention in an epitaph where a mother wept over the death of her young daughter: μήτηρ καταλείβεται, 'the mother disintegrates in weeping', said the text. This image evoked passages of Euripides with similar contexts, we noted, scenes of weeping mothers in tragedy.⁷⁹ At this time we might also recall Niobe, turned into stone from so much weeping for her children. Some versions of the myth tell how the rock continued to shed tears. The contrast between stone and tears (those of Niobe, those of the Gorgons, those shed over the stelai that we have studied), is another type of opposition between life and death, just as we have seen with light and darkness, sound and silence. Moisture symbolizes life; the dead have only thirst.⁸⁰ The soul (*psyche*), or life itself, slipped away as the last breath from the mouth of Homeric heroes; but it also escaped through wounds, through bleeding. On the side of the living we find vigour, blood, tears, also fear; it should not

surprise us, then, that all these nouns frequently share the same adjective: *chloros* (χλωρός).⁸¹ The moisture of life in contrast to the dryness of death, humours of life that seem to be reactivated at the nearness of death, in the form of terror that produces a cold sweat, in the form of tears that are exuded as a libation.

The stone, the stele, is the perfect embodiment of death: it blocks the rays of the sun; it remains mute, awaiting someone who might pass and lend their voice to its inscription; it thirsts for tears and libations. Thus marking the boundary between two worlds, like the Gorgon, like Niobe turned into a stone that continues to weep.

Conclusions

The private metrical epitaphs from the Archaic and Classical periods offer information of great interest from many viewpoints. From the literary standpoint, they are rooted in the tradition of the epic and the earliest lyrics. A single hexameter or elegiac distich, these brief texts gave substance to aspirations of eternal fame for men and women, especially those who died as youths, for whom artistic memorials were raised.

The epic tone of the earliest epitaphs in verse, from the sixth century BC, and the quality of the statues and stelai, even signed by the artists in some surviving examples, point to an aristocratic world and to aristocratic values. These ideas of excellence (*arete*) gradually became democratized, until, in the fourth century BC, they were no longer the property of any particular social group. In the chronological study presented here, I have wished to highlight this evolution and how these versified epitaphs became incorporated into the tradition of encomiastic poetry. To do so I have pointed out the similarities and differences in comparison to such well-known and well-studied genres as the threnodic elegy and the *epitaphios logos*. The joint study of epitaph and stele, when surviving, has made two aspects of Archaic and early Classical funerary art particularly clear: it is retrospective art, and its purpose is not so much to reflect reality as to construct an ideal. Any interest in the hereafter, in awards or recompense after death, is scarcely present. Instead, the joys of past life are celebrated, and the loss of this earthly life and its possibilities is mourned, especially when referring to youths who died in the prime of life. On the other hand, the image displayed of the deceased is an idealized creation, not a reflection; it is a construction to help family and society preserve the memory that they wish to remain. This does not mean that the epitaphs are repetitive or formulas: I believe I have shown that metrical funerary epigraphy from the Archaic and early Classical ages offers unique, original literary images, playing with evocative proper nouns, and introducing metaphors that only centuries later would become stereotypes.

The chronological presentation of the epitaphs was then extended with attention to their protagonists' age and gender. In this manner I have been able to specify the scope and development of certain expressions that scholars are excessively inclined to call 'formulas'. While lament for an early death, *mors immatura*, was stereotypical for referring to the death of youngsters, it is not true that lament for a death before marriage (*pro gamou*) was typical or exclusive to the epitaphs of girls. Prior to the fourth century BC, it was very uncommon to find references to this circumstance; from that time on, it became usual to indicate the graves of those dead before marriage with marble loutrophoroi, as well as with direct allusions in the epitaph, but these are more frequent on the graves of young boys than of

young girls, who married much earlier. Similarly, I was able to identify an epitaph from the late sixth century BC as the first example (in the known evidence) of a metaphor now quite familiar to us: 'bride to Hades', referring to the destiny of young girls who died before marriage.

I also considered it of interest to explore notions of friendship as reflected in the funerary epigraphy, even though there is quite little evidence to draw from. Compared to the vast majority of memorials raised by the deceased's family members, we also find a few examples where the dedicant is a friend. The lexicon of friendship and love is not interchangeable between Greek and modern languages, because the realities reflected by these terms are not equivalent. In any case, we do not fully know the details of friendship and love in ancient Greece; this is especially true when we speak of women. For this reason, it is of interest to closely examine the epitaphs that present friendship relationships, and offer this analysis as one more chapter to the existing studies on friendship in Ancient Greece.

When studying the epitaphs of men and women side by side, we find that the similarities in the praise of youths of either sex practically disappear in the funerary epigrams of adults. It seems clear, even from a study limited to epigraphs that explicitly mention the deceased man or woman as married, that such women's epitaphs deal almost exclusively with the family context, and offer practically no other information about the deceased woman, while for men, information on their marital status is only circumstantial. Despite this, I have also shown how the desire for women's fame is greater than what might be expected from the well-known words of Pericles' funeral speech: the epitaphs of women do boast of the fame attained by deceased women.

In addition to the well-known and well-studied contrast between the man killed in battle and the woman who dies in childbirth, in these pages I have sought to establish a connection between death at sea and death in childbirth. War, the sea, childbirth, day-to-day dangers in the lives of common men and women – these are the only three cases where funerary epigraphy prior to the Hellenistic period mentions the cause of death. This topic has allowed me to return to the controversial Plutarchian text on Spartan funerals, and to propose new arguments in favour of maintaining the manuscript reading in the passage from the *Life of Lycurgus*: 'when they buried them, it was not allowed to inscribe the name of the deceased over the grave, except for a man who had died in war, or if it were a woman, one of the *hiérai*'. While acknowledging the evidence that death in childbirth was often indicated in the epitaphs of women who thus perished, and that the war/childbirth dichotomy was strongly present in Greek thinking, I believe there is no reason, either linguistic or otherwise, to modify the text of Plutarch.

Finally, one of the most important contributions of this essay, in my estimation, is its demonstration that the chronological study of funerary

epigrams is absolutely necessary and offers the best conclusions with regard to religious ideas. I have analysed how funerary art from the Archaic and early Classical ages was retrospective, and focused on mourning the life past. In the fourth century BC, although sporadic and by no means typical, glimpses of eschatological interest begin to appear: Queen Persephone, so connected with mystery cults, now appears for the first time in the epitaphs, and in relation to her, we find mentions of the deceased's piety and possible recompense in the hereafter. This fact prompted my interest in establishing a comparison between the epigraphic evidence and the (Bacchic) gold tablets from the same era: although the epitaphs and the lamellae have different functions, although epigrams were public and visible, and the lamellae were private and 'visible' only to the deceased, the common elements are quite clear and the comparison often quite enlightening.

In short, the metrical epigraphy prior to the Hellenistic age, funerary epigrams of the sixth to fourth centuries BC, constitute an exceptionally valuable study corpus. Compared to the later epigraphy and the literary epigram of the Hellenistic age, these texts reveal new emotions and literary images, not yet stereotyped. From the point of view of historical analysis and the study of values, they also contribute interesting data on the transition from the world of aristocracy to that of democracy, and on the emerging idea of citizenship, a matter we have only touched on briefly here. As for the study of religious ideas, epitaphs from the fourth century BC are a direct source, indispensable for examining the appearance of new beliefs about the nature of the soul, one's *post mortem* destiny, and the hereafter. It is no coincidence that just as new ideas about the Other World and eschatological allusions begin to appear in the epitaphs, we also find the first texts from the *lamellae aureae* and curse tablets corpora that reflect a change in beliefs about the souls of the dead, no longer the same beliefs seen in Homeric poems. The very concept of 'belief', long absent from studies of Greek religion, has been revived and reinforced in recent years. I think that the considerations I proposed in the last chapter about a qualitative change in the idea of *eusebeia* are consistent with this methodological shift that is beginning to prevail over the markedly ritualistic studies that previously predominated among scholars of Ancient Greek religion.

Notes

Introduction

1

Aloni (2009: 181).

2

See Derderian (2001), Arrington (2015), Tentori Montalto (2017).

3

Daux (1972: 503–66).

4

Some clarifications about the meaning of these concepts (*arete*, *agathos*, *aristos*, *kleos*) in the world of Homer can be found in Adkins (1960, 1971, 1997) and Long (1970). In Spanish, see the interesting study of Lledó (1998).

5

Burkert (1985).

6

CEG 593; further information, Chapter 4.

1 The funerary landscape: a reflection of the world of the living

1

I use the term ‘necropolis’ here in a generic sense. We also find examples of the ‘family plot’ (pantheons). The existence of cemeteries in a strict sense, even the Kerameikos itself, is debatable. See Patterson (2006: 56): ‘The Ceramicus itself was known in antiquity, as it is today, as the repository of many tombs, but it was not a cemetery. Both ancient evidence and modern archaeology establish that the area outside the city walls called the Ceramicus (and in the fourth century so marked by boundary stones) was a multi-use area, notable especially for the prevalence of tombs (Athenian and non-Athenian) and pottery workshops (as well as prostitutes and public gatherings).’

2

The general information presented here is based primarily on the following studies, listed in chronological order: Kurtz & Boardman (1971), Morris (1992), D’Agostino (1996), Polignac (1996), Whitley (1996, 2001).

3

I do not analyse funerary monuments of children in this book, and I only mention this generic difference between the burial of adults and children as a example of how funerary archaeology codifies age, gender and social class. A very interesting, detailed study about child burials in Athens can be found in Houby-Nielsen (2000), which deals with such questions as age distinctions (categorization of infants, small children and older children); modes of burial and grave goods for children; and the geography of child burial.

4

The Kerameikos is not the only Athenian necropolis but has provoked the most interest among researchers, and is a well-established archaeological site. It was already a

cemetery in the Archaic Age, and some of the memorials from that time were used in the construction of the walls of Themistocles; in the Classical period it was associated with public funerals for the war dead and from the late fifth century until the end of the fourth century BC, it acquired individual and family gravestones. See in this regard Mega de Andrade (2010). As the author indicates, the Kerameikos was always a 'public' place, not only as a *demosios* but also as a thoroughfare, a place of movement, of daily comings and goings. There is ample bibliography on archaeological aspects of the area of the Kerameikos; as a starting point, see the studies by Karl Kübler, especially Kübler (1976).

5

Fundamental for the study of funerary customs at this time is D'Onofrio (1993).

6

The notion of 'formal burial' was introduced by Morris (1987). Regarding the possibility of gathering certain demographic data from the study of such formal burials, see the well-documented discussion in Whitley (2001: 233–43), precisely in reference to seventh-century BC Attica.

7

In this regard, see Whitley (1994).

8

D'Onofrio (1993: 145). To identify these nobles, who so lavishly entertained themselves with funerary cults, with the elite of the political class (in contrast to the Athenian *polis*), see Valdés (2011).

9

I will deal with these sculptures in the third section of this chapter.

10

Houby-Nielsen (1995).

11

Humphreys (1980: 106). Cf. also Houby-Nielsen (1995: 156–9). Morris (1992: 132) situates Mound G burials at 560 BC. There is also a reference to this tumulus in Lougovaya (2004: 14), reminding us that Kübler, who excavated the monument in the 1950s, thought even then of the possibility that it might be the grave of Solon. Knigge (1976) attributes G to the Alcmaeonidae.

12

On this cemetery at Agora, see Immerwahr (1973), Bradeen (1974) and Papadopoulos (1996).

13

D'Agostino (1996: 457–8). However, the extension of the city walls, and the precise limits of the expression *intra muros*, is the object of debate. See Young (1951), and more recently, Winter (1982).

14

On the reuse of stelai in the Themistoclean wall, see Keesling (1999: 512–18), where the author speculates on the possibility that some cases were examples of processes of *damnatio memoriae*.

15

Based on Thuc. 2.34.1–5 (τιθέασιν οὖν ἐς τὸ δημόσιον σῆμα, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τοῦ καλλίστου προαστείου τῆς πόλεως, καὶ αἰεὶ ἐν αὐτῷ θάπτουσι τοὺς ἐκ τῶν πολέμων, πλὴν γε τοὺς ἐν Μαραθῶνι), the idea has been established of the Demosion Sema as a national cemetery reserved for honoured Athenian war dead. Patterson has questioned this identification and she argues that the concept of an Athenian national cemetery is a 'modern invention', Patterson (2006: 55): 'it seems best to keep demosion sema just what it is – Thucydides' own idiosyncratic term, perhaps meant to evoke a heroic or

poetic model, for the public (paid for with public funds) tomb of the war dead'. Arrington refers to this place as a public cemetery and calls it the *demosion sema*, 'even though it was used for other purposes in addition to burials at public expense' (2010: 500, n.4). See Arrington (2015).

16

Loraux (1981), Arrington (2015). On public monuments for war dead, not included in my study, see Tentori Montalto (2017).

17

Arrington (2010: 529).

18

Or Leokoriou Gate. See Arrington (2010: 500, n. 5).

19

Houby-Nielsen (1996, 2000).

20

The displacement of commemorative monuments from the private to the public sphere is not the only explanation for the gap in funerary monuments in Athens. See Keesling (2005: 396 n. 5). Keesling also mentions a sumptuary law dated after Solon's reforms (see below), the dismantling of Archaic tombs for reuse in the Themistoclean city wall, and a fifth-century culture of restraint in public display.

21

Boardman (1988).

22

A detailed study on the use of *loutrophoroi* can be found in Sabetai (2009). Regarding the appearance of *loutrophoroi* in the grave offerings, *Opferrinnen*, we read the following: 'The occasional inclusion of *loutrophoroi* in the trenches from the sixth century BC onwards indicates that these vases were considered essential symbols of an unattained ideal status, that of becoming a husband or a wife and founders of a new *oikos*' (2009: 299).

23

Langdon (2005).

24

For example, *IG* XII, 3 781 (Thera, c. s. 700 BC), where we read: Ἐτεόκληια (fem.).

25

Il. 11.371; 13.437; 17.434; 23.331.

26

Richter (1961).

27

Richter (1968, 1970). Another very recent joint study about the *korai* is Karakasi (2003), with excellent reproductions and a geographically ordered presentation of the material. Regarding the elaborate dress of the *korai* offered to Athena in the Acropolis and the nudity of the *kouroi*, see Iriarte (2007).

28

With regard to the aristocratic nature of these statues, it should be noted that this can be stated with almost complete certainty for funerary statues. In the case of the votive *kouroi* and *korai*, these may also be dedications of *banausioi*; see Keesling (2003a).

29

Whitley (2001: 219).

30

On this matter, see D'Onofrio (1988). Along these same lines, Bruss (2005: 39) indicates that the funerary epigrams that we know make no reference at all to the cemetery or funerary complex in which they are located, but they do refer to being 'along the road'.

31

D'Onofrio (1982: 152–7). Ever since the idea of the *kouros* being a sculpture form that reaches its peak in the aristocratic society of the sixth century BC and declines along with that society, a complete map of Greek geography has been made with reference to the places where *kouroi* had been found, observing their correspondence to areas of the Aegean where aristocracies were prevalent. A critical presentation of this idea can be found in Whitley (2001: 219–20).

32

D'Onofrio (1982: 164): 'La giovinezza è un attributo della statua ed è anche naturalmente la principale qualifica del *kouros* epico, ma essa non va considerata come una "categoria analitica", definibile in base ad una classe d'età fisiologicamente determinata, bensì come una "categoria storica": in Omero i *kouroi* sono i giovani rispetto ai *gerontes*, dove *kouroi* e *gerontes* rappresentano insieme il gruppo socialmente attivo degli uomini'.

33

Above all, I have followed Boardman (1978: 163ff.), but Richter (1961) continues to be a reference volume.

34

Athens, Kerameikos, c. 540 BC, reproduced and discussed in Richter (1961: fig. 92).

35

Thucydides I 93.2.

36

National Museum of Athens, n. 29, c. 510 BC, reproduced in Richter (1961), figs. 155–8 and 180 for different details of the stele; figs. 211–12 for the inscriptions that indicate the name of the warrior Aristion and of the artist Aristocles, with commentary by M. Guarducci.

37

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (n. 11.185) and Museum of Berlin (n. 1531), c. 540–530 BC. I will discuss this stele later, and the possibility that it belonged to the family of the Alcmaeonids. Appearing under the title of 'Stele of the Alcmaeonids', with commentary, see Bianchi Bandinelli & Paribeni (1976, fig. 308). Reproduced and discussed in Richter (1961), figs. 96–109 and 190 for the stele, fig. 204 for the inscription.

38

Fragment of the Anavyssos stele, Attica (National Museum of Athens, n. 4472), c. 530 BC. Found in 1958.

39

CEG 89 (= GVI 1600), c. 430–420 BC. Museum of the Kerameikos. See Richter (1961), n. 59, figs. 151–3.

40

Boardman (1985 (1st ed.): 68ff).

41

Acarnania, c. 460 BC. National Museum of Athens, n. 735.

42

Staatliche Museum of Berlin, n. 1482, c. 460–450 BC.

43

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, n. 27.45, c. 450 BC.

44

Archaeological Museum of Icaria, c. 470–460 BC. Holtzmann (2010) considers it an exceptional work, comparable in Attica only to the Damasistrata stele, one century later.

45

Louvre, Paris, n. 701, c. 470–460 BC. To be discussed in the chapter ‘Immortal remembrance of friends’.

46

D’Onofrio (1982: 163–8) and Loraux (1975: 3–5).

47

This aspect, which I will not address here, is analysed by Kosmopoulou (2001). Stelai from the fourth century BC are analysed, almost none of them in verse, indicating the professions of wet nurse, priestess, midwife and *lanifica*.

48

Especially *Solon* 21, 1 and 5–7. See Manfredini & Piccirilli (1977). The texts on Solon’s laws are translated and discussed in Blok (2006). See also Leão & Rhodes (2015). Also worthy of consultation is Garland (1989). Both studies analyse Attic funerary laws, but also the laws of other parts of Hellas. Morris (1992–3) is rather sceptical about any information of archaeological interest that might be drawn from our limited knowledge of the funerary law.

49

The evidence concerning Epimenides can be consulted, with translation and commentary, in Colli (1978). Also see García Gual (1989) for a general, very clear introduction to this Cretan figure whom Diogenes Laertius and Plutarch include in the list of the ‘sages’. For more material of interest concerning this wise *purifier*, who slept for decades in the cave of Zeus, see Pòrtulas (1993–5). I will not cite the extensive bibliography regarding this important sage-shaman, but only that which relates to his time in Athens and his relationship with Solon, for example, Federico (2002) and Pòrtulas (2002).

50

Plutarch, *Solon* 12, 8. About the destabilizing role of female lamentations in the funerary ritual – keeping the memory alive and instigating revenge – see Iriarte & González (2008: 209–27).

51

Garland (1989: 4).

52

D’Onofrio (1993: 167).

53

This idea is developed in Blok (2006).

54

Proximity to the corpse increased the risk of contamination, and the women received more exposure than the men, simply because they were women. In the words of Blok, they were already ‘structurally susceptible to pollution’ (2006: 232).

55

The order for men and women to walk separately in the cortege is attributed to Solon in Pseudo-Demosthenes 43.62: βαδίζειν δὲ τοὺς ἄνδρας πρόσθεν, ὅταν ἐκφέρωνται, τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας ὀπίσθεν, ‘that men should walk ahead in the conveyance of the corpse, and the women behind’.

56

Having said this, there is no intent to minimize the political implications of these funerary practices. A clear description is offered in the final words of Valdés (2011: 65): ‘Meals held around the dead in their graves, constituting in this period a ‘public’ act and form of self-assertion for the *aristoi*, especially for the Eupatridae as opposed to the *demos*, manifest both the aristocratic cohesion represented by the banquet, and their tendency toward heroization. These realities legitimated their exclusive rule in the

aristocratic polis of Athens (depriving the *demos* of their *time*, in Solon's words), at a time when citizens (*astoi*) are the ones who have the prerogative to hold burials and celebrate banquets, both practices coming together in privileged fashion at funerals.'

57

Iriarte & González (2008: 209–27), with bibliography.

58

Seaford (1994: 83).

59

Cicero, *De Legibus* II. 64.

60

Plutarch, *Solon* 31, 3; see Richter (1945). There are also authors who attribute the reform to Themistocles, *vid.* the commentary on Cicero's text in Dyck (2004), and Blok (2006: 240–3), with bibliography.

61

For the history of Greek funerary monuments in Attica, despite the many years since its publication, Friis Johansen (1951) continues to be indispensable.

2 The literary form: tears of Simonides ... and of Pindar

1

A detailed catalogue of literary references can be found in Di Tillio (1969). Also, Gentili (1968) offers an appendix with a non-exhaustive series of *loci similes* between the elegiac inscriptions (burial and dedicatory) from the seventh to the fifth centuries BC, and the Archaic and Classical elegy. See also Ecker (1990).

2

Wallace (1970: 100) affirms that the assertive and elegant nature of private funerary epigrams is never so apparent as in the Athens of the Peisistratids. Cf. also Day (1989: 17). The earliest extant metrical inscriptions are hexametric (Corinth and Corcyra), while the increased corpus of sixth-century epigrams is primarily elegiac and centred in Athens: see Derderian (2001: 70).

3

In a technical sense, the *threnos* was a lyric literary genre whose purpose was lamentation for the dead. However, in tragedy it already had the additional sense of 'lamentation' in general.

4

Bowie (1986: 24–6).

5

Aloni (2009: 168).

6

The reference work on this genre is Loraux (1993).

7

Of course, private metrical epitaphs continued to exist in the Hellenistic and Imperial eras, but this study is limited to Archaic and Classical Greece.

8

Loraux (1993: 45).

9

Loraux (1993: 77–8).

10

Loraux (1993: 78).

11

Vid. later in this chapter, on the idea of ‘aristocracy’.

12

In relation to the classification of different literary genres, see Harvey (1955). On origins of threnody see Derderian (2001).

13

Harvey (1955: 170–1).

14

Archilochus, Fr. 13 W. Translation by Podlecki (1984).

15

Specifically, the distich formed by verses 10–11 of the Fr. 9W. Actually, there is a series of fragments from Archilochus, 8–13W, known as the ‘Elegy of the Shipwreck’, but it is not clear whether all of these form part of the same poem. Some authors defend the independence of Fr. 13W that I have reproduced above.

16

Gentili (1968: 59). More bibliography and more arguments for and against the threnodic nature of this elegy in Cannatà Fera (1990: 20–2).

17

On this poem, see Cannatà Fera (1988: 62–9), where, with regard to the contrast between the initial statement on not reproaching lamentation, and the final turn that encourages us to reject it, we are reminded of the polarity principle so common in Greek thought, examined in depth in the classical work by Lloyd (1966).

18

See *CEG* 143, discussed in chapter 7.

19

See the detailed commentary in Cannatà Fera (1990: 23ff.).

20

Detienne (2006: 190ff.).

21

See Bravi (2006). A recent, complete study on Simonides can be found in Nazaré Ferreira (2013).

22

Simonides, 531 PMG. Trans. Bowra (1961). In 7–8 he follows the word order suggested by Wilamowitz: κοσμὸν ὃ Σπάρτας.

23

Stehle (1996).

24

Boedeker (1996).

25

Johnston (1999: 20–1). On authenticity of this epigram, see Nazaré Ferreira (2013: 286).

26

On patronage in the case of Pindar, see Kurke (1991) and Hornblower & Morgan (2007).

27

Robbins (1997: 257).

28

Cannatà Fera (1990: 28).

29

Cannatà Fera (1990: 35–6).

30

I will discuss this in the chapter ‘Immortal Remembrance of Friends’.

31
Derderian (2001: 117–27).

32
Gentili (1989: 153).

33
Nagy (1996).

34
The ‘male’ clarification is from the author himself.

35
The same idea is found in an interesting article on the monument to the fallen in the battle of Marathon, Whitley (1994: 230): ‘There were simply no other symbolic forms available to the new democracy other than those that evoked aristocratic, and heroic, prowess. Aristocratic forms had to be ‘collectivized’, appropriated by the community as a whole for public, i.e., state, purposes.’ See also Keesling (2010).

36
After having reviewed the ductility of ‘aristocratic values’, suitable for characterizing, as needed, any of the three forms of government known to the Greeks: oligarchy, democracy, tyranny.

37
Nagy (1996: 591–2).

38
Donlan (1999: 96).

39
Donlan (1999: 58).

40
Duploux (2006: 22). See also Kurke (1991) on the ideology of *megalo-prepeia*.

41
Pindar, *Isthmian* 1, 67–8. Trans. Sandys (1978).

42
Pindar, *Nemean* 1, 31–2. Trans. Sandys (1978).

43
Plutarch, *Cimon* 10. 5.

44
See below, chapter 3.

45
The most widespread term for referring to the noble is ἀγαθός, but also ἐσθλός, καλὸς κἀγαθός, χρηστός or σπουδαῖος, Aristotle’s preference.

46
CEG 68 (= GVI 1223).

47
Gentili (1968: 55).

48
For this formal reason for the domination of elegiac form in epigram see Aloni (2009: 170).

49
CEG 27 (= GVI 1224). See chapter 3.

50
On the ambiguities of this lamentation, see González González (2010a: 160–2).

51
Euripides, *Troades* 1190–1.

52

Regarding reading and the first Greek epitaphs, see Svenbro (1988), especially chapters 2, 'J'écris, donc je m'efface. L'énonciation dans les premières inscriptions grecques,' and 3, 'Le lecteur et la voix lectrice. Statut instrumental de la lecture à haute voix.' It seems clear that the epitaphs were intended to be read and in this case, we do not consider the open debate regarding votive inscriptions. See Day (2010), Livingstone (2011).

53

Day (2007: 32).

54

Angelos Chaniotis addresses emotions in Greek epigraphy in two recent studies: (2012a, 2012b).

55

Chaniotis, in the studies cited in the previous footnote, scarcely addresses the study of Archaic and Classical epitaphs. His analysis is based on ample epigraphic documentation (decrees, votive inscriptions, funerary inscriptions), most of which is from the Hellenistic or Imperial era.

56

The statistics can be consulted in Lougovaya (2004: 18), Archaic age, and (2004: 144), Classical age, and in Meyer (1993: 109).

3 Phrasikleia, *forever a maiden*. Kroisos, *whom raging Ares destroyed*

1

See the statistics in Humphreys (1980: 104).

2

Baumbach, Petrovic, Petrovic (2010).

3

Schmitz (2010a).

4

Sourvinou-Inwood (1995: 144). In any event, while we have noted and recognized the different origins of these terms, it is not always possible to detect differences in their use. Simondon (1982: 85) indicates that 'alors que σῆμα désigne le tombeau sans rapport avec le mort, μνῆμα n'a de signification que par rapport à lui', but she considers that this difference is only evident when both terms are used in the same epigram.

5

Vernant (1990: 17–82, especially 57–8).

6

Evidently, I am referring here to heroization in very general terms, always with reference of the Homeric epic. I will not address the problem of the hero cult, or even the definition of the term 'hero', both of which are very complex questions on which there is already an abundance of specific literature. See Antonaccio (1994), Ekroth (2002), Bremmer (2006), Albersmeier (2009).

7

Hermay (2006). For information on the measurement of these *kouroi* and *korai*, see Kaltsas (2002a). Regarding the *kouros* and the Colossus, see also Ducat (1976). This same author offers data on the number of funerary *korai* and *kouroi*: four funerary *korai* (three from Attica) from a total of seventy-seven and twenty-seven funerary *kouroi* (twenty-two from Attica) from a total of 104. The data offered by Ducat is in turn taken

from the well-known monographs by Richter (1968, 1970). The information provided by Ducat helps us see the small proportion of funerary statues in comparison to votive statues; along these lines, the catalogue presented by D'Onofrio (1982) is more up to date but does not substantially change the facts. This author catalogues thirty examples of funerary *kouroi* and seven *korai*. See now Meyer & Brüggemann (2007).

8

This was articulated by Rohde (1925: 43), a pioneer in studies on the Greek idea of the soul.

9

See Sourvinou-Inwood (1988: 28–30, 51–7).

10

Friis Johansen (1951: 109–10). This same fact is pointed out by D'Onofrio (1988: 95): by the end of the seventh century, monumental stelai and statues share the characteristic of no longer being placed over the mound, but nearby, in a location clearly visible from the road, making them privileged objects of ostentation, part of the funerary space of a group, 'secondo un modello che gli esempi precedentemente illustrati di Vourva, di Phoinikia, di Merenda, di Velanideza, illustrano con particolare evidenza'.

11

See note 7. Of the four funerary *korai* noted by Ducat, two are only fragments: in one case we have the feet of a marble statue, found in the Attic deme of Vourva, with a fragmentary inscription (CEG 18), c. 550–540 BC (Richter 91) – the inscription is composed of an elegiac couplet and the statue is the work of Phaidimos; see the epigraphic commentary by M. Guarducci in Richter (1961); the other example is a marble torso, found in Moscato, Attica, in the first third of the sixth century (Richter 40). The *kore* of Berlin (Richter 42) is the only complete example of funerary *kore* that can be cited apart from Phrasikleia. This statue comes from Attica and is dated c. 570–560 BC. It presents very similar iconographic elements to those of Phrasikleia: a crown decorated with meanders and lotus flowers, a necklace with pomegranates, one pomegranate in her right hand. See the reproduction and commentary in Boardman (1978: 73, fig. 108). Cf. also Sourvinou-Inwood (1995: 250): 'the "Berlin Goddess" and Phrasikleia may be seen as iconographical articulations of the metaphor that eventually crystallized into the "bride of Hades" metaphor'. Note 111 indicates that this list of *korai* had been updated in D'Onofrio (1982); the author distinguishes between examples where the place of origin is known, and their funerary use has been demonstrated, and others where this information is uncertain. In the former category there are three examples already cited by Ducat (the fragments of Richter 91 and 40 and the Phrasikleia statue) and she adds another fragment, a head found in Merenda, in a burial area from the Geometric and Archaic periods (now in the Brauron Archaeological Museum 1265). In the latter category is the *kore* of Berlin, already known to Ducat, and two others: Archaeological Museum of Piraeus 2530, from the first quarter of the sixth century BC, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art 07.286.110, 535–500 BC. Karakasi (2003) does not include any new discoveries in terms of funerary *korai*.

12

Boardman (1978: 72–3).

13

CEG 24 (=GVI 68); Attica, c. 540 BC, Epigraphical Museum, n. 13383, for the inscription; National Museum of Athens, n. 4889, for the *kore*.

14

Jeffery (1990: 73). Although this is the *communis opinio* on the matter, see Keesling (2003b), who criticizes the assumption that any writing that 'looks like' *stoichedon* is *stoichedon*.

15

Svenbro (1988: 25) and Benveniste (1969: 43–50). Svenbro also points to the parallelism of this epitaph expression with verses from Sophocles, *Antigone*, 917–18: οὔτε τοῦ γάμου μέρος λαχοῦσαν.

16

They need not be exclusive references, as understood in Svenbro (1988), who is inclined to the former.

17

Chantraine (1968–80, s.v. κόρος): ‘fille, jeune fille, assez souvent équivalent de θυγάτηρ, rarement équivalent de παρθένος; peut, d’ailleurs se dire de une jeune femme’.

18

At earlier dates, this image is documented in very few cases, and almost never so explicitly. Out of Hansen’s large volume, *CEG*, only six epitaphs of maidens have images that associate death and marriage, all of them from the fourth century BC.

19

Svenbro (1988: 13–32). Regarding the Alcmaeonids’ interest in art and the question of repeated names, see Lévêque & Vidal-Naquet (1964: 83–9, and 56, respectively).

20

Jeffery (1976: 185); Rigdway (1977: 279).

21

Brinkmann, Koch-Brinkmann, Piening (2010: 189–91).

22

At least in the pre-democratic city. See Vernant (2004: 62): ‘[...] le jeu des échanges matrimoniaux obéissant à des règles très souples et très libres dans le cadre d’un commerce social entre grandes familles nobles, commerce au sein duquel l’échange des femmes apparaît comme un moyen de créer des liens de solidarité ou de dépendance, d’acquérir du prestige, de confirmer une vassalité’.

23

Posidippus A–B 50, 55. See González González (2010b).

24

Osborne (1994: 92). The author also indicates that the inscriptions on votive *korai* quite often include the term *agalma* (offering, adornment), nearly absent in inscriptions for the *kouroi*.

25

Stieber (2004). This author understands the necklace to be made of lotus, not pomegranates as Sourvinou-Inwood believes, and she insists strongly on the symbology of the lotus, image of life and of death, appearing in the statue ‘in bud, in full flower, and in fruit’, in representation of the three states of existence.

26

Sourvinou-Inwood (1995: 249–52). Also Vernant (1990), includes a mention of Phrasikleia at the end of his study: ‘Partie pour l’Hadès, comme Corè, fille de Déméter, avant d’avoir connu l’hymen, Phrasikleia s’est trouvée fixée par la mort dans sa condition de vierge. Le privilège que les dieux lui offrent et qu’exprime son image funéraire c’est d’être devenue pour toujours, dans son statut de défunte, cette *corè* virginale qui la figure sur sa tombe.’

27

phrasi- would be an old dative plural of φρήν, while *-kleia* would come from κλέος.

28

Stewart (1997: 115).

29

Reilly (1989).

30

Brinkmann, Koch-Brinkmann & Piening (2010).

31

SEG 57.799. End of the sixth century bc. First publication in 2007. Two joining fragments of a cornice of white marble belonging to a funerary monument.

32

On this expression see Bremmer (2014: 188).

33

The study of reference for this image in tragedy is Rehm (1994).

34

Kouros found in 1936 in Anavyssos, Attica, now in the National Museum of Athens, n. 3851. Regarding this image, see Philadelphus (1935–6), and Stieber (2005–6). This *kouros* and the Kroisos inscription are exhibited together in the National Museum of Athens, and the literature on the subject contains frequent references to the ‘Kroisos *kouros*’. However, it is not absolutely certain that the base block belonged to this particular *kouros*. Other interpretations are given in Neer (2010: 24–7).

35

CEG 27 (= GVI 1224).

36

CEG 10 (public epitaph for the Athenians fallen in Potidaea) and CEG 112.

37

Derderian (2001: 97). Epigrams dedicated to warriors use ὄλεσθαι, both in transitive and intransitive forms; this particular transitive use, with Ares as subject, is the primary usage.

38

Tueller (2010: 42).

39

Tueller (2010: 46).

40

Il. 5. 30, 35, 355, 454, 507, 830, 904; 15. 127, 142; 21. 406; 24. 498. Regarding the use of formulas of this type in funerary poetry, see Di Tillio (1969).

41

Tyrtaeus, Fr. 12 W.

42

Vernant (1990: 57).

43

Loraux (1993: 75).

44

Stieber (2005–6: 4).

45

Richter (1961: 67).

46

D’Onofrio (1982: 168).

47

Eliot (1967). Also, Anderson (2000) considers this *kouros* and the accompanying epigram as evidence for the presence of Alcmaeonids in modern Anavyssos, in southern Attica, between 540 and 530 bc. But not everyone agrees with this lapse of time between the death of the youth and construction of the statue; see Stieber (2005–6: 1).

48

Young (1983: 40).

49

CEG 13 (= GVI 1226), c. 575–550 BC, Attica, Epigraphical Museum, n. 10650.

50

Loraux (1993: 67), expressly referring in a note to the epitaphs of Kroisos and Tetichos, affirms the following: ‘Discours indissolublement militaire et politique, l’oraison funèbre ne reconnaît pour siennes que les valeurs masculines et refuse du même mouvement le *thrênos* et les appels à la pitié si fréquents dans les épitaphes aristocratiques célébrant un guerrier.’ Guarducci (1987: 158) points to the suggestive Thucydidean echo that can be discovered in the last verse of the epigram dedicated to Tetichos: the idea that after mourning before the tomb, one should resume his daily labours, brings to mind the words of Thucydides (II, 46, 2) in Pericles’ funerary oration for the Athenians fallen in the first year of the Peloponnesian War (νῦν δὲ ἀπολοφυράμενοι ὃν προσήκει ἐκάστῳ ἀποχωρεῖτε). This political reading is accepted by Loraux (1993: 367).

51

Ferrandini & Cagnazzi (2010).

52

Gernet (1968: 339, chapter ‘Les nobles dans la Grèce antique’, originally published in 1938): ‘Les nobles sont des gens de la ville: dans l’ancienne Athènes, le mot ἀστοί, “citadins”, est synonyme d’eupatrides.’

53

Aristotle, *Politica* 1278a. Regarding these questions, see Chantraine (1968–80, s.v. ἄστυ).

54

CEG 112 (= GVI 321), Boeotia, c. 500 BC. There are only two other appearances of the term ἀστός in the funerary epitaphs collected by Hansen (CEG 123 and 172), both of them from the 5th century BC, and neither from Attica.

55

Day (1989: 19).

56

Tueller (2010: 51–4).

57

Vegetti (1989: 16–17).

58

CEG 25 (= GVI 148), with different proposed reconstructions. The stele is in the New York Metropolitan Museum (n. 11. 185), although a certain fragment is also preserved in the Altes Museum of Berlin (n. 1531).

59

Richter (1961: 29): ‘The excellent preservation of the majority of the fragments points to an early burial [...] Apparently therefore, the monument was broken up not long after it was erected, and for this the exile of the Alkmeonids after the battle of Pallene (dated between 541–538 BC) would supply a plausible reason; for, according to Isokrates (XVI, 21), not only were the houses of the Alkmeonids destroyed, but their graves were dug up. Furthermore, the exceptional splendour of the monument suggests its erection by a wealthy, prominent family – either by the Alkmeonids or some other.’ In the epigraphic appendix to the Richter work, by Guarducci, credibility is given to reconstruction of the name Megacles. Hansen rejected the restoration Me[gacles]. See Keesling (1999: 513).

60

Friis Johansen (1951: 96–8), Boardman (1978: fig. 232). See also Richter (1961: no. 37), with epigraphic commentary by Guarducci. Shapiro (1993) also discusses this stele and the relative scarcity of funerary monuments dedicated to women.

61

Sahin (1992).

62

CEG 26 (= GVI 74). Brauron Museum, BE 838. See epigraphic commentary by Guarducci, in Richter (1961: 157–8).

63

In Tsagalis (2008), accurate statistical graphs show us that in the Attic epitaphs of the fourth century BC, only on very rare occasions are the dead mourned as brothers or sisters.

64

Originally published by Sigalas & Matthaïou (1992–8). Two dactylic hexameters. Thera, c. 550 BC. It is reproduced in SEG 48.1067, but with an error at the beginning of the second verse, where it reads Δαμόκλεια’.

65

See the following chapter, CEG 174, ‘How to deprive the year of its spring’. Regarding the construction of this proper name, see Sigalas & Matthaïou (1992–8: 395–6).

66

Johansen (1951: 109).

67

CEG 37 (= GVI 58), c. 530 BC, Attica. British Museum, n. 935. It is a very curious piece, described and reproduced in Marshall (1909: 153–4).

68

Il. 16. 450–7. Trans. Robert Fagles.

69

CEG 40 (= GVI 156). Attica, c. 530–520 BC. Epigraphical Museum, n. 10645. Regarding doubts that arise from the end of the verse, between a final -ς or -v, see commentary in Hansen *ad loc.*

70

Bicknell (1971).

71

Tentori Montalto (2017).

72

CEG 14 (= GVI 159), c. 560–550 BC, Attica. New York Metropolitan Museum, n. 16.174.6.

73

CEG 18 (= GVI 155).

74

CEG 26 (= GVI 74).

75

Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* III 15.9.

76

Jeffery (1990: 62–3).

77

Boardman (1978: 74).

78

On this question see Jeffery (1990). Also interesting is Wallace (1970: 100): ‘Sculptors rather than mourners, certainly, were sometimes responsible for the composition of the verse itself, as the praises of the sculptor Phaidimos show.’

79

The term reappears in a stele recently discovered in Boeotia (see later chapter ‘Immortal remembrance of friends’).

80

CEG 32 (= GVI 147), c. 530 BC, Attica. Epigraphical Museum, n. 13314.

81

CEG 35 (= GVI 139), c. 530 BC, Attica. Kerameikos Museum.

82

Κλέ[[β]]βολος : see Hansen. The first β at the end of the line had been erased, because in the next line, either by error or by incorrect syllable division, β is repeated.

83

CEG 41 (= GVI 157), c. 530–520 BC, Attica. Epigraphical Museum, n. 10642.

84

CEG 46 (= GVI 154), c. 525–520 BC, Attica.

85

CEG 50, c. 510 BC, Attica. Kerameikos Museum, n. I 389.

86

For the indicative οἰκτίρο instead of the imperative in CEG 51, see Hansen's commentary on CEG 471.

87

CEG 51, c. 510 BC, Attica. Kerameikos Museum, n. I 327.

88

CEG 68 (= GVI 1223), c. 500 BC, Attica. Epigraphical Museum, n. 10641.

89

Thus, Nicosia (1992), under the epigraph 'Malgrado la bellezza' translates 'che era bello, eppure è morto'. In the same way, Duplouy (2006: 128): '... et pleure celui qui était beau et qui aujourd'hui est mort.'

90

Gentili (1968: 75).

91

Regarding these artists, in addition to occasional remarks in Jeffery, see Dimartino (2010). Aristocles made both funerary and votive monuments, see Keesling (1999: 523).

92

Day (1989: 20).

93

Day (1989) dedicates a brief part of his study to the interrelationship of literary and iconographic conventions in funerary monuments, that is, to how epitaph and image reinforce each other. Curiously, he takes the Tetichos epitaph as an example and 'reconstructs' what the accompanying monument must have been; by contrast, however, he says nothing of Phrasikleia or Kroisos, presently preserved in their entirety.

4 How to deprive the year of its spring

1

Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1365a 31: οἷον Περικλῆς τὸν ἐπιτάφιον λέγων, τὴν νεότητα ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ἀνηρησθαι ὥσπερ τὸ ἔαρ ἐκ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ εἰ ἐξαίρεθει.

2

One of the types of Greek ceramic vessels, with a very long neck, used for carrying water in ritual marriage and funeral ceremonies.

3

While it is true that the death of children is also untimely death, I have excluded their epitaphs from this study in order to focus on youths, as I explain in the introduction.

4

I will refer later to an epitaph from the first half of the fifth century BC, found in Sinope and kept at the Museum of Istanbul, where we find this motif (CEG 174).

5

CEG 518 (= GVI 1654). Attica, c. 375–350 BC. National Museum of Athens, n. 3964. Clairmont 13, tab. 7; CAT 1283.

6

This expression ‘so that all who pass by may see it’, as well as others that refer to the funerary monument being placed along the road, have to do with the desire of the elite classes to give visibility to their dead, and are customary references in memorials from the Archaic and Classical periods. See, among others, D’Onofrio (1988), Bruss (2005: 39), Mega de Andrade (2011).

7

More recently, Bruss (2010: 400) expresses himself in similar terms. In his opinion, the correlation between text and epigram is relatively insignificant. As for the appearance of the mirror motif, he states that ‘taken perhaps as characterizing her unmarried state, the mirror may be reflected in the epigram in the second and third lines, where her parents – not a husband – are named’.

8

See references in the previous chapter.

9

Leader (1997). As for the rest, the premise of her study (that funerary stelai from the late fifth and fourth centuries constitute an important source of information on the ‘visual construction’ of gender in Athens) is perfectly acceptable.

10

Beginning, of course, with the introductory volume of the catalogue by Clairmont (1993–5), hereafter, CAT. Another essential work is Bectarte (2006a).

11

Hoffmann (2006). A detailed inventory of female figures in funerary monuments according to age, position, attributes, hairstyles and clothing, can be found in Bectarte (2006b).

12

Bectarte (2006a). The catalogue starts with the fifth century BC, when this motif makes its first appearance, and ends arbitrarily with the first century BC. To distinguish when we are dealing with a mirror or when it is a spinning wheel, the author follows the criteria set forth by Wasowicz (1989): not to consider the minimal formal unit a mirror but rather a spinning wheel, ‘l’objet rond ou allongé pourvu d’un manche’, which appears in a context of textile work.

13

Frontisi-Ducroux (1991: 136).

14

In support of this idea, she adds that while the mirror is systematically held by female figures, only once does it appear in a clear *toilette* context, in an Attic funerary stele where the woman holds the mirror with her left hand while arranging her hair with her right hand (CAT 2291a). We can also add to this catalogue a stele from the Calvet Museum of Avignon, which I will mention later.

15

An assumption which we do not find in other scholars who, without making value judgements, limit themselves to indicating the mirror’s cultural value as being ‘female’. For example, Hoffmann (2006: 63), commenting on the Pausimache stele, states that the mirror is ‘un simple objet de toilette qui reflète sa féminité, voire sa coquetterie’.

16

Bectarte (2006a: 179–80).

17

A popular theme among Greek vase painters between the eighth and fifth centuries BC. See Dietrich (1997: 25), with bibliography.

18

CEG 10.6 (= GVI 20).

19

CEG 535 (= GVI 1755), c. 350 BC. Marble stele found in Piraeus, now in the Agora Museum I 1114.

20

CEG 545.1–2 (= GVI 1757), c. 350 BC. Marble stele found in an unknown location in Athens, now in the Epigraphical Museum, n. 8842.

21

CEG 558.2 (= GVI 595), c. 350 BC. Fragment of a marble base found in the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, now in the Epigraphical Museum, n. 9475. Practically, the entire epigram is a reconstruction from Kaibel. Hansen does not totally agree with the reconstruction, but he does accept the appearance of the term *σῶμα*.

22

CEG 548.2–3 (= GVI 1963), c. 350 BC. Marble stele, broken at the bottom and on the left. On the left, a woman, seated, on the right a man, Demetrius, standing. Found in an unknown location, now in the National Museum of Athens, n. 1115. Clairmont tab. 21.42. Once again we are dealing with a reconstruction, in the case of the term *σῶμα*.

23

The examples mentioned here are all that have been documented for the fifth and fourth centuries BC. Bectarte (2006a: 178) mentions three of those addressed here, ‘*parmi de nombreuses autres épitaphes comparables*’, an excessively optimistic statement if we limit ourselves to the Classical age.

24

CEG 611 (= GVI 1781), c. fourth century BC. Marble stele fragment. Found in an unknown location, now in the National Museum of Athens.

25

Vegetti (1989: 75ff.). For the concept of soul among the Greeks, which I only touch on here, the works of reference continue to be Rohde (1925) and Bremmer (1983a).

26

Regarding the ‘immortal soul’, see *supra* ‘A note regarding the translations’, in the Introduction.

27

This concentration of evidence should not cause us to lose the perspective that out of thousands of stelai produced, the present motif is not especially frequent, as compared to others such as *dexiosis*.

28

I base myself on the previously cited catalogue from Bectarte (2006a), based in turn on CAT, which offers a total of 63 funerary monuments: thirteen in the fifth century BC, twelve in the fourth century, two in the third century, twenty-seven in the second century and nine in the first century BC. Geographically: thirty-eight from eastern Greece, nineteen from Attica, two from Rheneia, one from Rhodes, one from Thrace, one from Boeotia, one from Thessaly. For my study I have excluded the cases (a total of thirteen) that represent decorative mirrors and not a hand mirror. I have also omitted one of the examples from the fifth century BC, CAT 4190 (a funerary lekythos, National Museum of Athens, n. 2584, where four figures are seen). Even though Clairmont’s

description speaks of a mirror in the hands of one of the young women represented in the scene, and Bectarte includes it in her catalogue, it is actually quite unclear. Neither the lekythos description in Kaltsas (2002), nor Welsh (1906), who published this piece for the first time, with good reproductions, says anything about a mirror.

29

For a more detailed analysis of the stelai studied here, see González González (2013b).

30

In the fifth century BC, they are as follows: CAT 1152, 1170, 1188 and 2187; for the fourth century BC, 1283 (Pausimache memorial) and 2209b.

31

The following belong to the fifth century BC: 2590, 2670; in the fourth century only one is recorded, 2210.

32

CAT 1471.

33

CAT 2208.

34

CAT 2255.

35

CAT 2291a.

36

CAT 1305.

37

There are four more stelai with a mirror that are not reproduced in CAT, although they are described in the catalogue. Two of them are unclear (CAT 2266a and 2831); a third represents death in childbirth (CAT 3345b); finally, the fourth stele is very fragmentary (CAT 4378).

38

CAT 1152, 1170, 1188, 1283, 2209b.

39

CAT 2187, 2255.

40

CAT 2208.

41

CAT 2255.

42

CAT 2291a and the one I have added from the Calvet Museum.

43

CAT 2590, 2670, 2210. Bectarte (2006a: 171), also proposes a classification by age, but different from what I am using. According to Bectarte, the use of the mirror varies according to the age of the figure that holds it: girls with a mirror are female servants or close relatives of an older deceased female, and the mirror that they are holding is not for themselves but for the adult figure (with the exception of CAT 1471, a stele that Clairmont rightly considers to be Roman, in my opinion); however, the figures that actively use a mirror are adult women.

44

Stears (1995) points to the link to sexuality, and more generally speaking, establishes that women appearing in funerary sculpture can be classified into five age groups: the swaddled baby, the little girl, the young unmarried teenager, the mature and married woman, the older, wrinkled and hunched woman.

45
Cassimatis (1998).

46
Cassimatis (1998: 346).

47
Houby-Nielsen (1996: 239–40).

48
See a presentation of these assumptions in Leader (1997).

49
CEG 174 (= GVI 1960a), c. 475–450 BC. Museum of Istanbul, n. 3868. Reproduced in Clairmont tab. 36.

50
In the Clairmont publication, the girl's name is understood to be Parthenika; in CEG, the publication that I usually draw from, the lower-case letter indicates that the girl is unnamed, designated only by the name of her father. On this occasion, and taking into consideration the epitaph of the girl from Thera (see previous chapter), I prefer the reading Parthenika. The object that the girl is holding in her hand appears to be a mirror, and this is how it is interpreted in Bectarte (2006a), but Clairmont sustains the doubt as to whether it is a mirror, a fan or a flower.

51
A discussion of the meter of this epitaph can be found in Clairmont, who observes more theatrical than lyrical elements, and in Fantuzzi (2010: 296, note 24).

52
CEG 119 (= GVI 942). Another variant, ἡλικίας ἄνθος, in CEG 701 (= GVI 496), fourth century BC.

53
CEG 4 (= GVI 14), from mid-fifth century BC.

54
In the corpus published by Hansen, the verb ὀλεσθαι appears here and in the following epitaphs: CEG 4 (public monument to the war dead, 458 BC, Attica: περὶ πατρίδος ὀλέσαστε ἡ ἐβέν), CEG 5 (public monument to the war dead, 447–446 BC, Attica: ὀλέσασ' ἐμ πολέμοι), CEG 13 (youth fallen in battle, c. 575–550 BC, Attica: νεαρὰν ἡ ἐβέν ὀλέσαντα), CEG 27 (base of the statue of a youth, ca. 540–530 BC, Attica: ἡ ὄν ποτ' ἐνὶ προμάχοις ὄλεσε θὸς ὁ ρος Ἄρεος), CEG 47 (Attica, male, the term πόλεμον appears), CEG 51 (epitaph of Smikythos, see chapter 3), CEG 82 (fragmentary epitaph, died for the homeland, c. 450–425 BC), CEG 99 (fragmentary epitaph, the stele represents a rider, and the term μάχη appears, c. 400 BC, Attica), CEG 117 (epitaph for a boy dead before his time, dedicated by his mother, γοῦσα, c. 480–450 BC, Thessaly), CEG 132 (epitaph of Deinias, see chapter 7), CEG 136 (youth fallen in battle, c. 525–500 BC, Argos, ἐν πολέμοι [φθ]ίμενον νεαρὰν ἡ ἐβέν ὀλέσαντα), CEG 143 (public monument of a man, c. 625–600 BC, Corcyra), CEG 145 (stele, c. 600 BC, Corcyra, seems to speak of a warrior who died near the ships, ὄλεσεν Ἄρεος), CEG 154 (elegiac distich for a boy who died young, c. 450–425 BC, Amorgos), CEG 155 (base of a marble statue, perhaps a rider, public monument, 476/5 BC, Paros), CEG 488 (epitaph of warriors, c. fourth century BC, Attica, ὤλεσε θούρος Ἄρεος), CEG 635 (fragmentary epitaph, c. fourth century BC, Boeotia, died for the homeland), CEG 661 (epitaph for a youth fallen in battle, c. 300 BC, Acarnania, ὤλεο πατρίῳ), CEG 716 (epitaph of a warrior, represented on the stele, ss. fourth–third century BC, Cyprus, ὤλεσα[ς ἡ]λικία[v]).

55
CEG 732, 400–350 BC. Histria Museum, n. 258.A-B.

56

CEG 575 (=GVI 1697). Two fragments of a marble stele with relief, including a small part with two women, one seated and another standing, Attica, c. 350 BC. Epigraphical Museum, n. 9376. Reproduced in Clairmont tab. 28.62.

57

CEG 573 (= GVI 1810). Two fragments of a marble stele, c. 350 BC, one in the National Museum of Athens (n. 2054), another in the Museum of Piraeus. Clairmont tab. 10.20, for the National Museum fragment.

58

Loraux (1975) refers to CEG 13 (epitaph from Tetichos, that I have already studied) and CEG 136 (stele of a warrior fallen in battle, from Argos).

59

She points to CEG 4 and 6 (public epitaphs of Athenians fallen in war, both of them from mid-fifth century BC).

60

Loraux (1975: 21).

61

Loraux (1975: 24).

62

Loraux (1975: 13).

63

Loraux (1975: 31): 'Les épitaphes versifiées du IV^e siècle sont trop rares ou trop mal conservées pour que l'on puisse y suivre le destin de chacun des deux modèles.' I understand that this refers exclusively to the two models of warrior accolade, focused either on ἀνδραγαθία or on ἀγλὸν ἥβην.

64

Vérilhac (1978).

65

Prior to this there are very fragmentary texts, such as CEG 43, c. 525 BC and CEG 45, c. 525–500 BC, where we read ἄ ἡ ὀροῖ; or CEG 75, c. 500–480 BC, ἄ ἡ ὀριον ἐς Αἶδαο.

66

CEG 154 (= GVI 889). Amorgos, c. 450–425 BC.

67

CEG 67 offers a fragmentary example of ὠραῖον.

68

CEG 477, c. 400–390 BC. Found in Piraeus. Museum of Piraeus. The inscription also includes the names of the three persons in the relief: on the left, a man with a beard, Littias, 100 years old; in the centre a girl standing, looking at the old man, Choirine; on the right, a seated woman, Lysistrate.

69

CEG 102 (= GVI 1564). Marble stele with a loutrophoros, Kerameikos, *in situ*, c. 400 BC. Reproduced in Clairmont, tab. 31.79 and CAT 2215a.

70

Loraux (1989: 40ff.). The author also indicates the similarity and possible etymological relationship with ὀδῖνες, a term that serves to designate both the pains of childbirth and their consequence, the child.

71

Tsagalís (2008: 201–2). Also Vérilhac (1978: 157): 'Pour les filles, ce thème apparaît dès l'époque archaïque. Pour les garçons, il faut attendre l'époque hellénistique et les exemples restent moins abondants que dans les épigrammes de jeunes filles'. However, even though she does not take into account the iconographical evidence, the author recognizes their importance when giving this warning: 'Mais souvent, à défaut d'une

indication écrite, un loutrophore placé sur la tombe rappelle que le défunt n'a pas connu le mariage.'

72

Boardman (1988). The author refers to the study by Kokula (1984).

73

CEG 495 (= GVI 1738). Attica, c. fourth century BC. Epigraphical Museum, n. 9476.

74

Tsagalis (2008: 155) remarks that it would be quite interesting to know whether it refers to that moving expression, οἰκτρὰ παθῶν. Further on, in a note (199, n. 209), he insists that images on a stele, which do not have to be realistic, are insufficient reason to conclude that the deceased died young. However, the presence of the loutrophoros is decisive in this case.

75

CEG 587 (= GVI 1820), c. 350 BC. Marble found in the Kerameikos. Kerameikos Museum.

76

A different interpretation is found in Tsagalis (2008: 202). Another possibility, suggested to me by one of the reviewers of this book, is that a distinction is established between the sphere of the house (no matter which house) and the 'outside' where the funeral rites and burial occurred.

77

Euripides, *Troades* 605–6.

78

Euripides, *Supplikes* 1115–19. The influence of Euripides in this passage is discussed in González González (2013a).

79

Benveniste (1969: 216–21).

80

CEG 591, c. 350–325 BC, Attica. Marble gravestone, Brauron Museum.

81

CEG 599, late in the fourth century BC, Attica. Marble gravestone, Brauron Museum.

82

Regarding this epitaph, see Tsagalis (2008: 76): 'She clearly stands out as an individual who is esteemed not simply as a family member but also as a citizen.' This statement must be qualified, in the sense that the girl cannot be a citizen.

83

CEG 648 (= GVI 1252), c. fourth–third century BC, Thessaly. Ogival stele.

84

There is a long list of verbs with a generic value of 'looking': ὁρᾶν, ἰδεῖν, λεύσσειν, ἀθρεῖν, θεᾶσθαι, σκέπτεσθαι, ὄσσεσθαι, δενδίλλειν, δέρκεσθαι, παπταίνειν, to which we must add the post-Homeric βλέπτειν and θεωρεῖν.

85

Snell (1953, 1–4): 'To see something bright ... It is clear, therefore, that this term too derives its special significance from a mode of seeing; not the function of sight, but the object seen, and the sentiments associated with the sight, give the word its peculiar quality.' That this meaning continued to be the one intended is demonstrated by the fact that the verb λεύσσειν, out of all the *carmina epigraphica* collected in Hansen's publication, appears only in this example and in CEG 595, φάος λεύσων.

86

AP VII 507.

87

CEG 527 (= GVI 544). Attica, c. 360–350 BC. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Reproduced in Clairmont, tab. 17.33 and CAT 2297.

88

Tsagalis (2008: 122).

89

CEG 593 (= GVI 1889), c. 346/338 BC, Kerameikos, preserved *in situ*. Reproduced in Clairmont, tab. 31.76 and CAT 2408a.

90

See Tsagalis (2008: 122ff.) on *Ananke* linked with Persephone.

91

See Philippart (1930).

92

See further discussion in Tsagalis (2008: 126ff.).

93

The debate is still open on who might be able to afford an inscribed funerary monument. A well-balanced study of this matter can be found in Oliver (2000).

94

See Murray & Rowland (2007: 18–21), Stehle (2001).

5 Immortal remembrance of friends

1

In the detailed statistics of Tsagalis (2008: 193) it is noted that the mourning of friends is not reported when the deceased is a woman, and if it is a man, only on one occasion does it mention that parents and friends were left in mourning.

2

Konstan (1997: 33). Konstan's study is convincing in its methodological approach, in considering that a concept of friendship similar to our own did exist in the Greek world, differentiated from the connection between family members or more extensive groups, and also differentiated from the connection between citizens. See the entire discussion on pages 1–23 of the introduction, especially 6–8. See also Konstan (1996).

3

The example of Achilles and Patroclus is covered extensively in Konstan (1997). See now also González González (2018: 62–9).

4

Poland (1893: 192).

5

Athens, Epigraphical Museum, n. 8852.

6

CEG 97 (= GVI 1415). Attica, late fifth century BC. Epigraphical Museum, n. 8852.

7

Poland (1893: 195–6).

8

Chantraine (1968–80, s.v.)

9

Benveniste (1969: 343).

10

Poland (1893) indicated that Βιότη is feminine, although infrequent, in contrast to the masculine Βιότος; as for Εὔθυλλα, it makes its first appearance here.

11

Barrio Vega (1992): 'En memoria de tu amor dulce y fiel, Biotes, tu compañera Eutila alzó esta estela sobre tu tumba. Con lágrimas te recuerda y se lamenta por tu juventud perdida.'

12

Calame (1996: 128).

13

Poland (1893: 197 with n. 28).

14

Calame (1996: 128).

15

Calame (1996: 25).

16

Fr. 404.2 (*S. Hell.*).

17

AP VII 710 and 712. There are doubts about attributing these epigrams to Erinna, especially in reference to the second one. Many authors have expressed their well-founded reservations (Pòrtulas: 1984), although there is no lack of those who defend its authenticity (Cavallini: 1991). See also Gutzwiller (1998: 77), who defends that AP VII 710 was an original inscription, similar to the one that we are discussing.

18

Thus, for example, CEG 527 (=GVI 544), Attica, c. 360–350 BC, where the *loutrophoros* on the stele indicates the youth of the deceased, well loved by his parents (μητρὶ φίλον καὶ πατρὶ) and mourned by sisters and friends (κασιγνήταις τε ποθεινὸν πᾶσί τε ἑταίροισιν).

19

In one of the epigrams of the *New Posidippus*, n. A.-B. 53, already in the third century BC we again encounter the ἑταῖραι mourning the death of a friend. In this case as well there are authors who, against all evidence, interpret the subject as a *hetaira*-courtesan, because of the term ἑταῖραι in the epigram. See Bastianini-Gallazzi (2001); Benedetto (2004: 206).

20

CEG 92 (= GVI 78), c. 420–400 BC.

21

Clairmont, 146.

22

Calame (1996: 128–9).

23

Roisman (1983). See also Scott (1981: 12): 'A companion who is *pistos* is one who can be relied upon to remain fixed among one's *philoï*, friends', and (1981: 14): '*pistos* is reserved for fixity in relationships between people and therefore it certainly comes within the co-operative sphere. A solid and certain bond between people is naturally of fundamental importance in relationships, and this *pistos* provides.' D'Onofrio (1988), insisting on the affinity between epigram and elegy, indicates specifically that the topic of *pistos hetairos* is an obsession in the poetry of Theognis (vv. 74, 77, 79–82, 415–16, etc). On *pistos hetairos* in Theognis, see also Konstan (1997: 49–52).

24

Observations taken from Iriarte (1990: 46–9), where the author analyses in detail how these pairs of heroes complement and contrast with each other.

25

In this case, the *extra metrum* placement of the proper name is not due to meter difficulties, since Πραξιῖνος could fit perfectly in a hexameter; see Fantuzzi & Hunter (2004: 296).

26

CEG 532 (= GVI 1786), c. 350 BC, found in Piraeus. Museum of Piraeus. There is an interesting comment with respect to this epitaph in Ginestí Rosell (2012: 146–7), in relation to the adjective πιστός, where she points to its customary use in public epigraphy and in oaths of military alliances. In this case the stele's location in Piraeus might mean that the person in question is not a politician, but rather a merchant who reached fame for honesty in his practices and transactions.

27

Gentili & Catenacci (2007). The authors' position is solid and well documented, of course, but I believe one of the arguments is too weak and does not contribute to the discussion. The recent papyrus discovery which completes the 'poem on old age' is wielded triumphantly in order to 'demonstrate' that Sappho was an elderly woman who addresses her poems to girls (παῖδες), and not, as the 'politically correct' criticism would have it, to women of her own age. This argument is untenable, if nothing more than because Sappho (in spite of everything!) was a real, historical woman, who like the rest of us, would pass through every stage of life.

28

Sontag (1966: 6).

29

M. de Montaigne, *Essais*, Livre I, Chapitre XXVIII: 'Joint qu'à dire vrai la suffisance ordinaire des femmes n'est pas pour répondre à cette conférence et communication nourrice de cette sainte couture: ni leur âme ne semble assez ferme pour soutenir l'étreinte d'un nœud si pressé et si durable (...) Mais ce sexe par nul exemple n'y est encore pu arriver, et par le commun consentement des écoles anciennes en est rejeté.' Although it seems that Montaigne changed his mind after meeting Marie de Gournay, these words form part of Western literary tradition.

30

Pharsalos, Thessaly, c. 470–460. Acquired by the Louvre in 1863 and catalogued in this museum as n. 701.

31

Rabinowitz (2002).

32

Younger (2002: 188ff.). See Koch-Harnack (1989) for the erotic nature of the lotus. As for Boardman (1985: 68), the only comment he makes about this image is that it is mysterious. Some have also identified the two figures as Demeter and Persephone.

33

Younger (2002: 188ff.). This idea does not contradict the common doctrine about *dexiosis* as posed by Friis Johansen (1951). Nevertheless, identifying the figures on this stele as Demeter and Persephone remains a possibility, since these two female characters are typically and distinctively represented as virtually indistinguishable doubles (see Foley 1994: 118).

34

Younger (2002: 189 and note 93, with bibliography).

35

Frontisi-Ducroux (1998: 209).

36

Bradeen (1974: n. 215). Previously published by Meritt (1960: 70–1): 'Euthylla is known as a name from the tombstone of Biote of the late fifth century (I.G., II2, 10954). She and the Euthylla of the present text (the name is rare) may have been identical'.

37

Another, new document can be added which was published more than a decade later,

exchanges.

52

For the specific case of Attica in the Archaic age, see D’Onofrio (1998).

53

She is also referred to in Andreiomenou (1999: 118).

54

This similarity was already mentioned in Andreiomenou (1999: 107 n. 208). See Estrin (2016: 209–10).

55

Archaeological Museum of Rhodes G 1640. See Kaninia (1997). Also reproduced and discussed in Holtzmann (2010: 200).

56

Kaninia (1997: 146–7) remarked on the high quality of this stele, an example of a Rhodes tradition upheld until the late fifth century BC, and which can also be detected in the famous stele of Crito and Timarista (Museum of Rhodes, n. 13638).

57

This relationship was highlighted by Kaninia (1997: 148).

58

Contra D’Onofrio (1998: 117).

59

It appears as an epitaph in *CEG*, and this is the current *communis opinio*, but there was no consensus in earlier editions. In Kaibel (1878), it appears as funerary epigram number 19; Hoffmann (1893) includes it as number 407 and, along with Kretschmer (1891), takes it to be votive, and a marker of the place where Gnathias lost his life. It also appears among the votives in Geffcken (1916), as number 61. Whether memorial or votive dedication (the ancient Greeks were not thinking of our future cataloguing concerns when they wrote!), it is a highly interesting piece of evidence.

60

For the expression *ἱερὸν εἶμι τοῦ θεοῦ*, ‘I am the consecrated object of god X’, typical of votive inscriptions, see Day (2010: 6–7). However, in the case of the epigram under discussion, considered by some to be votive as we just indicated, note that there is no mention of any divinity as the object of the dedication.

61

CEG 47 (= *GVI* 2042), c. 525–500 BC, Attica, Epigraphical Museum, n. 6730.

62

This verse is *extra metrum*. Kretschmer (1891) recognized the possibility that there might be a reference here to the Attic deme of Ἡρωιάδαι; however, he rejects this option in favour of a reading τοῦ Ἡρωιάδου, ‘son of Heroiades’, now commonly accepted, although a few translations (viz. Nicosia 1992) prefer the other option.

63

Aristotle, *Categories* 10b7, says that the adjective τοῦ ἀρετῆ ἰσ σπουδαῖος. The σπουδαῖος, ‘serious’ or ‘thoughtful’, person is a sort of moral model in Aristotelian ethics (Jiménez 2014: 373).

64

Anacreon, Fr. 2 West. Trans. Bowra (1961).

65

Crönert (1910).

66

This epigram is noticeably absent in Duploux (2006: 138–43), where he collects the epitaphs that were commissioned by individuals with no family relation to the deceased. He does mention the recent discovery of the Mnesitheus memorial. No

female epitaph is analysed under this epigraph entitled ‘Compagnonnage antique’. See Fantuzzi (2012: 223).

6 Wives and their masters

1

Tsagalis (2008: 186 and 193 for the statistical figures).

2

CEG 167 (= GVI 97), c. 400 BC. Chios.

3

Friis Johansen (1951: 11).

4

Clairmont, 117–19 and tab. 19.39 for this funerary monument. CAT 2406.

5

CEG 530 (= GVI 1387). Museum of Piraeus, n. 20.

6

Lefkowitz (1983: 36) mentions it in arguing that feelings of reciprocal love in marriage are exemplified, at least conventionally, in epitaphs such as this one.

7

This has been the preferred aspect in the criticism. See, among others, Walsh (1991), Fantuzzi & Hunter (2004: 310), Tsagalis (2008: 260), Schmitz (2010b: 378–9).

8

For some editors, beginning with Kaibel, φιλοῦντα was added at a later time, perhaps a *marito* (cf. Hansen).

9

Daux (1972).

10

Thus, Clairmont stands up for these influences, keeping in mind that both Plato and Aristotle are contemporaries of the date proposed for this epitaph, and in Aristotle’s case, similar formulas appear on more than one occasion.

11

This parallelism is simply noted, without further comment, in Geffcken (1916), but it is not included in any of the earlier or later publications that I have consulted. Tsagalis (2008: 300) cites Geffcken, but does not join in the analysis or discussion of influences.

12

Schear (1984).

13

Chantraine (1968–80), s.v. μέλι, indicates anthroponyms derived from μέλι, Μελίτων, f. Μελιτώ, and derived from μέλισσα, Μέλισσα, m. Μέλισσος. Thus I have no certainty of an etymological derivation, but I have evidence that *in fact*, language speakers make this association. For example, in Hesiod’s *Theogony* 247, the scholiast writes about Melite, one of the Nereides: Μελίτη: τὸ ἡδύ, ἡδὺ γάρ τισι τὸ πλεῖν, making her name derive from the fact that, for some, sailing is *sweet*.

14

See also Brown (1997: 76), regarding these verses by Semonides: ‘The bee-woman is an ideal wife. Owning to her efforts, the substance of the οἶκος flourishes and is increased, and she produces fine children. To these familiar feminine responsibilities is added a strong bond of affection with her husband.’

15

I cannot agree with Nielsen-Bjertrup-Hansen-Rubinstein-Vestergaard (1989: 419), who

assert that 'the epithet χρηστός and the greeting χαῖρε are never used for citizens, very rarely for metics [...] Inspection of the fourth-century monuments on which the terms χρηστός or χαῖρε occur seems to corroborate the assumption that they were set up by persons of low status and slender means. There are no *aedicula*, and only one *lekythos*. Almost all the inscriptions are cut on simple stelae without any relief or other forms of elaborate decoration.' The authors use a corpus from 400 BC to 250 AD, although here they refer specifically to the fourth century BC, the same period that gives us the Melite stele.

16

See a presentation of these assumptions in Leader (1997). The function of images in a culture is to present and promote desirable social norms, values that exist only imperfectly in real life. Generally speaking, the idea that these figured representations convey mental constructions more than they reflect daily life was defended in a book that became a turning point in studies on iconography and the classical world, AA.VV. (1984); and in the same line, Frontisi-Ducroux (2004).

17

Hoffmann (1997: 26). The author adds, 'L'épouse, assise au centre du groupe familial, paraît exprimer au mieux cette permanence d'un temps qui lie les générations, sans sortir du cercle du foyer.'

18

Amplly represented in the Attic funerary stelai.

19

A very detailed study of this gesture can be found in Llewellyn-Jones (2003). The author carries out a documented study for the purpose of distinguishing the ritual of ἀνακαλυπτήρια and its related images from another gesture that would indicate the contrary: covering oneself as a sign of αἰδώς.

20

Llewellyn-Jones (2003: 103).

21

Thucydides II 45.2. Trans. M.R. Hammond, Oxford, 2009.

22

CEG 486 (= GVI 822), fourth-century BC Attica, found in Piraeus. Epigraphical Museum, n. 9262.

23

CEG 493 (= GVI 891), fourth century BC, Attica. Museum of Piraeus.

24

For a somewhat different interpretation, see Tsagalis (2008: 179): 'The function of the two reference-groups is not the same: the formulaic expression ἐν ἀνθρώποισι denotes the entire society as the framework delineating the bestowal of praise. On the other hand, the second reference group (γυναικῶν) specifies the kind of recognition the deceased has received: passers-by and readers are left to infer that Chairippe's virtue was based on certain female qualities she possessed.'

25

CEG 513 (= GVI 1962), c. 380–370 BC, Attica. Said to be found in Velanideza. Glyptothek Munich, n. 491. Reproduced and discussed in Clairmont, tab. 15 and CAT 2286.

26

Fantuzzi (2010: 300).

27

On this term, see Janko (1981).

28

CEG 536 (= GVI 343), c. 350 BC, Attica. Archaeological Institute of Leipzig. Reproduced and

discussed in Clairmont 20.40 and CAT 2434a.

29

CEG 573 is also dedicated to a young wife, but I have dealt with it *supra*.

30

CEG 538 (= GVI 863), c. 350 BC, Attica. Museum of Laurion.

31

CEG 539 (= GVI 495), c. 350 BC, Attica. National Museum of Athens, n. 722. Reproduced and discussed in Clairmont, tab. 23.

32

See commentary in Tsagalis (2008: 191–2).

33

CEG 542 (= GVI 596), c. 350 BC, found in Piraeus. Museum of Piraeus, n. 1625. Reproduced and discussed in Clairmont, tab. 27.

34

Lamptreios is a demotic (from the Attic deme of Lamptraia) and must be an error in the translation suggested by Tsagalis (2008: 144): ‘daughter of Euphronios, son of Lamptreus’.

35

CEG 543 (= GVI 1986), c. 350 BC, found in Piraeus. Museum of Piraeus.

36

From the Attic deme Pithos.

37

CEG 86 (= GVI 79), c. 430 BC, Attica, National Museum of Athens, n. 1680. Reproduced and discussed in Clairmont 11. tab.6.

38

Such a pity that we cannot accept Peek’s reconstruction! It would make a very interesting epitaph, because of the appearance of the term εὐσεβεία, as well as use of the verb ἀνάγω in this context: [σημα τόδ’ εὐσεβί]ας ἐπ’ Ἀριστομάχης τάφῳ ἡ ἐμ[αι] / [εἶθ’ Ἑρμῆς ἀνάγ]οι τὸς ἀγαθὸς φθίμενος.

39

A detailed study of piety in ancient Greece and of the vocabulary that describes it can be found in Bruit Zaidman (2001), whose line is followed here. Another study that continues to be quite useful is Rudhardt (1992).

40

Bruit Zaidman (2001: 109).

41

Bruit Zaidman (2001: 111–12).

42

CEG 592, c. 350–317 BC. Hadrian’s Library, n. M 1324.

43

Masson (1986: 257), ‘on doit penser au babillage et au bavardage des femmes’. It is fair to add that the same explanation, the allusion to talkativeness, is proposed by the author for the name of young Tetichos, whom I have discussed *supra*.

44

CEG 590 (= GVI 1790), c. 350–325 BC, Attica. Museum of Berlin, n. 741.

45

CEG 603 (= GVI 1491), c. fourth century BC, Attica. Lost.

46

On this formula, see last chapter.

47

See Tsagalis (2008: 129–30).

48

CEG 690 (= GVI 893), c. 360–350 BC, Rhodes. Three hexameters and two pentameters for Clairmont; however, Hansen takes the second verse to be a pentameter as in 493.

49

In a prior epitaph (CEG 495), I translated δαίμων as ‘divinity’, while here I use the term ‘destiny’. The two meanings are equally common and I believe that the context justifies the choices I have made. In another later appearance of the term (CEG 586), I again translate it as ‘divinity’. In this regard, see Suárez de la Torre (2000), which differentiates the following meanings for the term: a) reference to a specific deity which one does not wish to identify or is unable to do so; b) based on the belief that each individual is assigned a personal or family *daimon*, it can mean ‘destiny’ or ‘fortune’; c) divine entities that are not necessarily Olympian and are generally negative; d) spirits of heroes, ancestors, and in general, the dead; e) in some philosophical tendencies, ‘soul’.

50

An *isoteles* was a foreign resident in Athens; a special statute allowed him to own property and granted exemption from the foreigner tax.

51

CEG 595 (= GVI 1689), c. 335 BC. National Museum of Athens, n. 856.

52

In this case, I am not convinced by the translation of this distich found in Ginestí Rosell (2012: 350): ‘També jo vaig néixer d’aquest home, semblant en tot en el privilegi de la vellesa i en preocupació per la pietat.’ It is true that in the first line of the epitaph, we read the name of the deceased, Geris, of his wife Niko and son Theophilus, but I agree with Hansen in taking ὁμοῖα to be feminine, not neuter, and that the epitaph refers to the man and wife, both of them dying at an advanced age.

53

CEG 662a, c. 350 BC Museum of Kamarina.

54

CEG 96 (= GVI 167), fifth century BC. Attica.

55

CEG 549 (= GVI 1779), 559 (= GVI 1686), 586 (= GVI 1638), 683 (GVI = 1688a).

56

CEG 639.

57

CEG 554 (= GVI 931).

58

Loraux (1985: 55–7). I believe we can identify the epitaphs indicated by this author as CEG 493, 525 and 670.

59

CEG 670 (= GVI 1690), fourth–third centuries, Amorgos.

60

About the origin and function of these conditional clauses in the epitaphs, see Tsagalis (2008: 33–9).

61

CEG 525 (= GVI 890), c. 360 BC Museum of Piraeus.

62

Epitaph of Praxinos, see *supra*.

63

Alcestis 614–16. In this case, overtones of Euripides are not noted by Tsagalis, who is always quite attentive to the influence of tragedy, but by Dover (1974: 68).

64

Contra Bruss (2010). Cf. his translation of *CEG* 670, 399–400.

65

CEG 509 (= *GVI* 894), c. 390–380 BC, Attica. National Museum of Athens, n. 1962. Reproduced and discussed in Clairmont, tab. 18.

66

It would also be possible to interpret this in the inverse sense: *with his remembrance the tribute of his father Olympichos increases*.

67

See Wilson (2007). A new reflection to support Wilson's study is in Tentori Montalto (2009).

68

Pausanias IX 12.5–6.

69

Wilson (2007: 146) indicates that the exact coincidence of the opening words should be understood as a direct echo of the Pronomos epigram in the Potamon epitaph.

70

AP XVI 28.

71

Fritz Graf, *privatim*. West (1992: 366 n. 39) seems to reach the same conclusion implicitly.

72

Schol. ad Pind. *Pyth.* 3.137b: Ὀλυμπίχου αὐλητοῦ διδασκομένου ὑπὸ Πινδάρου.

73

This is the general opinion, based on the fact that the name is inscribed *extra metrum*, below the epigram and with larger-sized letters. In Ginestí Rosell (2012: 183) there is a good photographic reproduction of the epitaph, where one may clearly appreciate the difference between the fifth verse and the rest of the epigram.

74

CEG 512 (= *GVI* 1386), c. 390–365 BC, Attica. National Museum of Athens, n. 1016. Reproduced and discussed in Clairmont, tab. 30.

75

CEG 586 (= *GVI* 1638), c. 350 BC Found in Piraeus. Epigraphical Museum of Athens, n. 13164.

76

See Hansen for a discussion of the name of the protagonist, which is shown differently in lines 1 and 5.

77

CEG 557.4.

7 Powerful enemies: childbirth, the sea

1

Loraux (1989: 30).

2

As indicated in Catoni (2005: 30), a soldier who had fallen in battle could be represented on a stele slaughtering the enemy, even though the real situation was evidently quite different.

3

Burkert (1987: 13).

4

See Stewart & Gray (2000: 263): 'Of course, because the reliefs that carry these two kinds of scenes are the only ones that betray the cause of death, and because both ways of dying can plausibly be understood as the ultimate gender-specific sacrifice on behalf of the *polis*, it is not unreasonable *prima facie* to suggest that the Greeks may have associated the two.'

5

This is the reading of the *codex Seitenstettensis*. The *codex Laurentianus* offers an identical reading except for the error of *ἐρῶς* instead of *ἐρῶν*.

6

Brulé & Piolot (2002: 486). The details of the textual problem that I present here are taken from this article. The first to challenge Ziegler's emendation in Plutarch's text was den Boer (1954: 288–300).

7

IG V 1, 713, 714, 1128, 1277. This evidence is not free of difficulties. The numbers 713 and 714 were those that supported the Latte emendation, and are probably from the Hellenistic age; later on 1128 was added, from the Roman era, and 1277, which presents a list of six women, three of whom were said to have died in childbirth. The latter is the most interesting inscription, as it demonstrates that the act of dying in childbirth cannot be the reason for recalling the name of the woman, considering that the names of other women who did not die in this circumstance are also included. Cf. Dillon (2007: 152–3).

8

IG V 1, 701–10, 918, 921, 1124, 1125, 1320, 1591? Brulé & Piolot (2002) have added certain recent discoveries to this series, both published and unpublished, that are preserved in the Museum of Sparta. See also Papapostolou (2010: 493–500).

9

Brulé & Piolot (2002) review the few instances of objections to the Latte emendation, and the arguments that have been wielded to silence them, always based on the idea that if the reading of the manuscripts is grammatically correct, the Latte proposal facilitates better comprehension of the text.

10

Richer (1994).

11

IG V 1, 1127, 1129, 1221, 1283, SEG 22.306.

12

In a later inscription, from 92 BC, which reports the celebration of certain important and ancient mysteries (Pausanias IV 1. 5–9) in this city of northern Messenia. The most recent edition and commentary on this inscription is Gawlinski (2011). See Bremmer (2014: 86–96) on Andanian Mysteries.

13

Brulé & Piolot (2002: 503–4, 513–14).

14

Dillon (2007: 157–8). The author indicates that the emendation is not accepted by Ph. E. Legrand (Budé, 1954) but by C. Hude (Oxford, 1927) and H.R. Dietsch (Teubner, 1909). Regarding the life stages of the Spartans, see Tazelaar (1967).

15

Gilula (2003: 84).

16

Paus. III.21.7; 22.6.

17

Le Roy (1961: 232).

18

Paus. III 25.4.

19

Paus. III 14.2.

20

Paus. III 25.3.

21

Teuthrone and Pyrrichos are located quite near each other, and Le Roy (1961: 228–31) established a relationship between the ἱεραὶ of one city and of the other: the sanctuary of Artemis *Astrateia* and Apollo *Amazonius* would have ἱεραὶ and ἱεραὶ due to influence from the sanctuary of Artemis in Ephesus (in both cases, the Amazons would have had a fundamental role in their founding). The author recognizes that their status is not easy to define, but that the presence of ἱεραὶ of Artemis in Ephesus is well attested in the inscriptions. He concludes, therefore, that the ἱεραὶ of Pyrrichos would come from Asia Minor. In the case of Teuthrone, their presence would be justified by its nearness to Pyrrichos.

22

Loube (2013). On most occasions, the pertinent information is provided by Pausanias. See also Richer (2007) and Budin (2016) on Artemis and Sparta.

23

See Chantraine (1968–80), s.v. λέχεται, λέχος, λόχος.

24

See a critique of this expeditious procedure in Loraux (1989: 32ff.).

25

Loraux (1989: 36).

26

Euripides, *Medea* 250–1.

27

Thus, the study by Catoni (2005) is based on a number of stelai and funerary lekythoi representing women who died in childbirth, where none of these cases are accompanied by inscriptions. Also to be consulted is Stewart & Gray (2000). The catalogue is made up of CAT 2457, 2917, 3282, 3340, 3375, 3422, 3463a, 4425 and 4470.

28

CEG 576 (=GVI 548); Attica, c. 350 BC. Epigraphical Museum, n. 10442.

29

Loraux (1989: 31).

30

CEG 604 (= GVI 837). Attica, c. fourth century BC. Epigraphical Museum, n. 10531.

31

Tsagalis (2008: 63–4).

32

Cairon (2009).

33

Cairon (2009: n. 85 = GVI 1606). White marble stele, Thessaly, mid-third century BC. Volos Museum. This stele is dated to between 200 and 150 BC by Salowey (2012: 251).

34

Salowey (2012: 251–2).

35
Arvanitopoulos (1909: 97).

36
Stewart & Gray (2000: 250–3).

37
Cairon (2009: n. 92). Stele with gable, Larissa necropolis, Thessaly, third century BC. As the editor of the text indicates, two forms of the deceased's name are found in the epitaph, the Thessaly variant in the first line, Πουτάλα, and the form without a dialect marker in the epigram, Πωτάλα. For the translation I have preferred the latter.

38
This is the opinion of Cairon (2006: 28). Later on, however, in the edition cited, Cairon (2009), she indicates something that we consider to be crucial, namely, the epitaph conveys that it is not marriage but maternity that converts a woman in γυνή.

39
Cairon (2006: 29).

40
Cairon rejects this reading, stating that if the epitaph had intended to refer to a terrible haemorrhage, it could have specified this much more clearly.

41
Thesis defended in Cairon (2006).

42
Brunnsaker (1962). In general, regarding the problem of the relationship between the narrative and the artistic representation, see Snodgrass (1987).

43
Georgoudi (1988) draws passages from the *Odyssey* V 312 (λευγαλέω θανατῶ, the 'wretched death' that Odysseus comes to fear in one of the storms suffered in his return to Ithaca) and *Works and Days* 687 (δεινὸν δ' ἐστὶ θανεῖν μετὰ κύμασιν, 'it is a terrible thing to die amid the waves').

44
Georgoudi (1988).

45
AP VII 291.

46
Attic funerary stele from the early fourth century BC. National Museum of Athens, n. 752.

47
CEG 132 (= GVI 53), c. 650 BC, Corinth, fragment of a limestone stele. Athens, Epigraphical Museum, n. 11517.

48
Jeffery (1947).

49
Chantraine (1968–80), and Beekes & van Beek (2010), s.u.

50
Odyssey XI 598.

51
The honorary title of *proxenos* could also be given to a citizen who looked after the interests of his homeland and his countrymen in another city (although this does not seem to be the case of the person in this epitaph).

52
CEG 143 (= GVI 42), c. 625–600 BC. Round tumulus, Corcyra. Public monument.

53

Guarducci (1987: 389–91). She indicates the appearance of the motif -μεν in the names of each brother (Menekrates and Praximenes), an example of the well-known consistency with certain lexemes in the onomastics of Greek families.

54

Day (1989: 24–5).

55

CEG 166 (= GVI 163), marble stele, fifth century BC. Found at an unknown location on the island of Sikinos (Cyclades).

56

Gutzwiller (2010: 233).

57

Bruss (2005: 31).

58

Bowie (2010: 337).

59

The term reappears in Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 3.425 and 21. 182, but in a work that belongs to a late period, around the fourth century AD.

60

Regarding these questions, see Chantraine (1968–80), s.v. ἀδελφός, and Benveniste, (1969: vol. II, 202–29).

61

Bremmer (1983b).

62

CEG 664 (= GVI 80), marble stone, c. 400–350 BC. Amorgos.

63

Hansen (2002: 24).

64

CEG 526 (= GVI 1985), c. 360 BC, Piraeus. Epigraphical Museum, n. 8894.

65

I have done the same *supra*, CEG 543. When I have found the adjective ποθεινός or verbal forms referring to the deceased, in lieu of the noun, πόθος, I have opted for a translation of ‘longing’ (CEG 512, 527, 530, 539, SEG 48.1067).

66

In Plato, *Cratylus* 420a we find this distinction: *pothos* indicates that it is not a desire for something present but for something far away and absent, ‘hence we now call *pothos* what was once called *himeros* when the object of one’s desire was present; having disappeared, it was called *pothos*’.

67

Fantuzzi (2010).

68

Fantuzzi (2010: 302–3).

69

CEG 544 (= GVI 1250), c. 350 BC, Attica. Museum of Piraeus.

70

CEG 722 (= GVI 929), c. fourth century BC, Neapolis (Kavala, Museum n. Α 124).

8 Rewards for piety ... next to Persephone

CEG 482 (= GVI 1702), early fourth century BC, Attica. British Museum, London, n. 1816 6-10-184.

2

Sassi (1981: 34). The author documents and analyses philosophic and literary texts that show affinities with this idea of ‘becoming earth’.

3

Sassi (1981: 36), citing Guthrie (1954: 280).

4

González González (2014a).

5

SEG 38: 440 (1988). Thessaly, fourth century BC.

6

Il. 14. 113–14.

7

Rohde (1925: 176).

8

Johnston (1999). See esp. Chapter 4, ‘Dealing with Those Who Die Violently’.

9

See Rudhardt (1992: 34).

10

Chantraine (1968–80), s.v. ὅσιος.

11

On *hosios*, see also Bremmer (1994: 3–4): ‘Another key term in this area is *hosios*. It had a wide range with a basic meaning of “permitted by or pleasing to the gods”. For example, *hosios* could be contrasted with *hieros* in order to contrast civic funds with those of the gods, but could also denote purity because pollution is offensive to the gods. More strongly, the notion of “pleasing” included that of “justice”, as is illustrated by a recently published funerary epigram of a certain Sosikrates, who died “not in a *hosios* way but through an unjust death”’. A recent study on *hosios* is Peels (2016), but she does not mention this epitaph.

12

See SEG 28: 528 (1978), third century BC, Pherae, Thessaly. Museum of Volos, E 1238. This is the epitaph of Lykophron, analysed in Cairon (2009: 244). See also Avagianou (2002).

13

Nussbaum (1972) convincingly analyses and explains the very few Greek texts where a soul is attributed to some divine being.

14

Burkert (1985: 272–5).

15

Rudhardt (1992: 15).

16

CEG 543, 592 and 603, translated and commented *supra*.

17

On ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘orthopraxy’ see Graf & Johnston (2013 (2nd ed.): 178). See Petrovic & Petrovic (2016).

18

CEG 571 (= GVI 747), c. 350 BC, Attica, now in the British Museum.

19

Undoubtedly there is an error in the English translation offered by Bernabé & Jiménez (2007), where in place of ‘nursemaid’ it says ‘father’: ‘I know that beneath the earth, if

there is reward for the good, / the highest privileges await you, father, next to Persephone and Pluto.’

20

Tsagalís (2008: 86–134) dedicates an extended chapter to this topic, to which I naturally owe a great deal.

21

The ones we have already seen are CEG 513, 575, 592 and 593.

22

CEG 75 (= GVI 2064), c. 500–480 BC, Attica, Epigraphical Museum, n. 10253.

23

CEG 83 (= GVI 630), c. 446–425 BC, Attica. Two marble fragments, Epigraphical Museum, ns. 8887 and 13357. A detailed analysis of the Pythion epitaph can be found in Ginestí Rosell (2012: 163–6).

24

CEG 84 (= GVI 95), c. 440–430 BC, Attica. National Museum of Athens, n. 3845. For the expression ‘house of Hades’, see Bremmer (2014: 188).

25

CEG 120 (= GVI 1831), c. 450 BC, Thessaly. Museum of Volos, n. 650.

26

CEG 121, c. 450 BC, Thessaly.

27

CEG 163 (= GVI 1529), c. 500 BC, Thera.

28

CEG 171, c. 475–400 BC, Egypt.

29

CEG 178 (= GVI 2070a), c. 440–430 BC. Museum of Verona.

30

CEG 490 (= GVI 1754), early fourth century BC, Attica. National Museum of Athens, n. 1115.

31

Cf. *supra*, CEG 591.

32

CEG 597, c. 330–320 BC, Attica. National Museum of Athens, n. 833.

33

CEG 629 (= GVI 1186), fourth century BC, Euboea.

34

CEG 640 (= GVI 170), c. 375–350 BC, Thessaly.

35

CEG 645, fourth century BC, Thessaly.

36

CEG 661 (= GVI 1458), c. 300 BC. Acarnania.

37

CEG 694 (= GVI 1229), fourth century BC, Rhodes.

38

CEG 699 (= GVI 111), fourth–third century BC, Rhodes.

39

A possible exception would be CEG 640 (= GVI 170), but Hades appears in this epigram as a place for the dead, not as a divinity, and although no negative connotations are expressed, neither is the lexicon of *eusebeia* used: εἴ τις κῆν Ἀΐδαι κειμένῳ ἔσσι χάρις.

40

CEG 511 (= GVI 1492), c. 390–365 BC, Attica, Epigraphical Museum, n. 10715.

41

Tsagalis (2008: 96–8).

42

CEG 489 (= GVI 1637), early fourth century BC, Attica. National Museum of Athens, n. 524.

43

CEG 510 (= GVI 488), c. 390–365 BC, Attica. Museum of Lyon.

44

CEG 513, translated and commented *supra*.

45

CEG 575, translated and commented *supra*.

46

CEG 592, translated and commented *supra*.

47

Recent editions include: Pugliese Carratelli (2001); Bernabé & Jiménez San Cristóbal (2007); Tortorelli Ghidini (2006); Graf & Johnston (2013 (2nd ed.)). See also a joint review of the last two titles in Calame (2008). Of the recent studies on this topic, see Edmonds (2011). In general, Radcliffe Edmonds's treatment of these documents, which are studied as mythical elaborations of a journey to the afterlife, is quite intriguing and goes beyond a narrow view of them as doctrinal texts. Very importantly, the second edition of Graf & Johnston, published in 2013, includes a new chapter (Appendix 1: 'Orphism in the twenty-first century') which clearly and concisely addresses the general problem of defining Orphism and the more specific problem of how the gold tablets relate to Orpheus. Regarding the latter, the dead are explained to be *bacchoi* or *bebaccheumenoí* (in line with the thesis defended throughout the essay). There are also convincing arguments against the scepticism about the antiquity (late sixth or early fifth century) of the Orphic-Dionysiac myth which explains and contextualizes the eschatology of the tablets. My references to Graf & Johnston follow the page numbering of the second edition.

48

Betz (2011: 103, n. 7) mentions a series of epitaphs from the Werner Peek publication, *Griechische Grabgedichte*, Berlin, 1960 (208, 210, 250, 255, 266, 278, 287, 304, 306, 450, 451) which, in his opinion, 'suggest an initiation of the respective person into a cult of mysteries'. Further on, 112, n. 67, he indicates that an encounter with Persephone is mentioned in three of them (208, 210, 266). Of the eleven epitaphs cited by Betz, 208 is from the third century BC, and 210 c. third–second centuries BC; the remaining nine are from our era, as late as the third century AD, and I believe they should not be considered indiscriminately, without giving thought to history and chronology.

49

Lamellae from Thurii (6 Thurii 4, 7 Thurii 5), fourth century BC. Museum of Naples. Texts are cited using the numbering from F. Graf & S.I. Johnston.

50

Lamella from Hipponium (1 Hipponion), c. 400 BC, Archaeological Museum of Vibo Valentia. Lamellae from Pelina (26 Pelinna a–b), late fourth century BC.

51

16 Mylopotamos.

52

On the important presence of women in these gold tablets, see Edmonds (2004: 65–69). Also Graf & Johnston ((2013 (2nd ed.)) pay special attention to this issue in their translation. See also Bremmer (2014: 69–70).

53

Lamella from Rome (9 Rome), mid-second or third century AD. British Museum.

54

Lamella from Thurii (3 Thurii 1), fourth century BC. National Museum of Naples, n. 111463.

55

Cairon (2009: n. 70, 224–6).

56

Lamella from Thurii (5 Thurii 3), fourth century BC. National Museum of Naples, n. 111625. Translation of Graf & Johnston (2013 (2nd ed.)). See commentary on this line on p. 128.

57

CEG 633 (= GVI 1446), fourth century BC?, *loco ignoto reperta*. Museum of Thebas, n. 142.

58

CEG 601 (= GVI 546), fourth century BC?, *loco ignoto reperta*. Attica, Epigraphical Museum, n. 5370.

59

Lamella from Sfakaki, near Rethymno (17 Rethymno 1), between 25 BC and 40 AD. Rethymno Museum.

60

Lamella from Eleuthema, on Crete (15 Eleutherna 6), second/first century BC. National Archaeological Museum of Athens.

61

Lamella from Pella (31 Pella/Dion 1), late fourth century BC.

62

More details in Rossi (1996).

63

An idea that I have taken indirectly from P. Themelis, cited in Gavrilaki & Tzifopoulos (1998: 349, note 23).

64

As mentioned, the bibliography on this subject is quite vast, but one clear explanation is found in Guarducci (1987: 320–5), regarding the lamellae, their connection to the Orphic religion and its gradual assimilation of elements from the Dionysiac and Eleusinian mysteries; as for affinities with Pythagorean philosophy, the author also indicates that in the lamellae corpus, one place of origin particularly stands out, Magna Graecia, and this ought to be considered in relation to Pythagoras's presence in that region in the sixth century BC. Among the recent studies, see Graf & Johnston (2013 (2nd ed.)), with very illuminating chapters on the eschatology of the lamellae and on the myth of Dionysus that may be reconstructed as context for the gold tablets. See also Graf (1991, 1993). On Orphism and Orphic-Bacchic Mysteries, see Bremmer (2014: 55–80).

65

CEG 579 (= GVI 498), c. 350 BC, Attica, Epigraphical Museum, n. 11113.

66

Never out of date is the foundational book by Guthrie (1993, 1952 (2nd ed.)). In its initial pages it already states that 'The influence of Orphic ideas on the mind of Greece was profound, but it is no mitigation of it to say that there may never have existed any body of people to whom it would have occurred to call themselves an Orphic community.' It is heartening to let oneself be carried along by books like this: who else but a classical scholar of other times would dare to affirm, with no hint of silliness, that 'It is no mere frivolity to remind ourselves that in Orpheus we are dealing with someone who has many of the qualities of the Snark and one important point of

resemblance to the Cheshire Cat'? But, returning to our era, I again refer the reader to Graf & Johnston (2013 (2nd ed.): 187–94) for clear indications on how to understand 'Orphism in the Twenty-first Century'.

67

Cannatà Fera (1990: 204–9), in a commentary on Fr. 62.

68

Edmonds (2004: 48).

69

Calame (2008: 300).

70

This is not a new idea: 'The most important divinity of the Gold Tablets undoubtedly is Persephone': so begins the article by Bremmer (2013).

71

Of course, Persephone's relationship to Orphism would serve to clarify the presence of the goddess on the lamellae and continue to call them Orphic. On Persephone and the Orphic literature, see Rossi (1996: 60), and, along with other titles, Bernabé (2008). On the importance of Persephone in the lamellae and on ascribing the tablets to Dionysiac rather than Orphic cults, see the interesting study by Calame (2011). The enlightening study by Calame focuses on the Derveni Papyrus and the lamellae of Pelinna, documents from the same time and place, providing the necessary solid basis for a proper comparison. On similarities between Dionysian and Eleusinian cults, see also Sfameni Gasparro (2003). On Dionysiac mystery cults and gold lamellae, see Graf & Johnston (2013 (2nd ed.): 137–66), and Bremmer (2014: 74).

72

Woysch-Méautis (1982: 81–3).

73

Od. 11. 633–5.

74

Od. 10.521, 536; 11. 29, 49.

75

Pythian 10, 46–8.

76

Vernant (1989: 121). Dimakopoulou (2010: 42–3) explores this same idea in more depth.

77

Vernant (1965: 74) uses the well-known example of Pandora to indicate that giving life to a stone or clay statue is to endow it with a voice: ἐν δ' ἄρα φωνὴν / θῆκε θεῶν κῆρυξ, ὀνόμηνε δὲ τήνδε γυναῖκα / Πανδῶρην (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 79).

78

Pindar, *Pythian* 12, 6–12, 19–24. Trans. John Sandys, Cambridge Mass., 1978.

79

See *supra*, CEG 587.

80

On this matter, reconsider the gold lamellae and the commentaries from the different publications that we have cited above.

81

I have addressed the problem of the suitability of the adjective *chloros* in all these expressions based on an original meaning of 'wet' in González González (2005). The underlying opposition is life/death, and one must recall that Hesychius, as late as the fifth century AD, offered χλωρόν τε καὶ βλέποντα as an expression equivalent in meaning to 'being alive'. For a more detailed study on this adjective, see Dimakopoulou (2010).

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BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK
1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA

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First published in Great Britain 2019

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Cover design: Terry Woodley

Cover image: Funerary stele of Democleides (fourth century BC). PRISMA ARCHIVO / Alamy Stock Photo

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: González González, Marta, author.

Title: Funerary epigrams of ancient Greece : reflections on literature, society and religion / by Marta González González.

Description: London, UK ; New York, NY : Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018040921 | ISBN 9781350062429 (hardback) | ISBN 9781350062436 (ePDF) | ISBN 9781350062443 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Epigrams, Greek—History and criticism. | Funeral rites and ceremonies—Greece.

Classification: LCC PA3123 .G66 2019 | DDC 888/.0102—dc23 LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018040921>

ISBN:	HB:	978-1-3500-6242-9
	ePDF:	978-1-3500-6243-6
	eBook:	978-1-3500-6244-3

Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk
Printed and bound in Great Britain

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our newsletters.